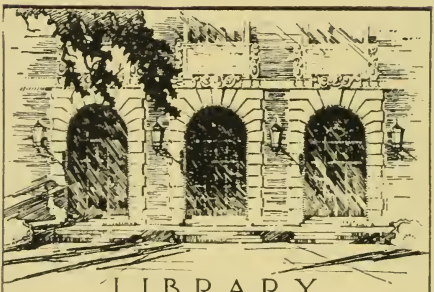
Eliza Giffard

Verquis Flintshire



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THE

MYSTERIOUS HAND.

A ROMANCE.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.

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Eliza Giffard
Vergnies
Flintshire

THE

Mysterious Hand;

OR,

SUBTERRANEAN HORROURS!

A ROMANCE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

AUGUSTUS JACOB CRANDOLPH.

Ordina in guisa
Gli umani eventi il ciel, che tutti a tutti
Siam necessarj, e 'l più felice spesso
Nel più misero trova
Che sperar, che temer.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
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LEADENHALL-STREET.
1811.

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THE

MYSTERIOUS HAND.

CHAP. I.

Divine Foi! dont la puissance
Guide nos esprits à ton gré,
Je me vois par ton influence
Au sein de la Divinité.
Quel éclat!
.....

Come then, Religion! Holy, Heaven-born maid,
Thou surest refuge in our day of trouble;——
To thy great guidance, to thy strong protection,
I give my child.
.....

The crickets sing, and man's o'er-laboured sense
Repairs itself by rest: our Tarquin, thus,
Did softly press the rushes ere he wakened
The chastity he wounded.———
O, sleep! Thou ape of death, lie dull upon her,
And be her sense but as a monument,
Thus in a chapel lying.

SOME days of anxiety and alarm passed after the disappearance of Theodore. Every

one regretted him. Every one apprehended that some unhappy accident had befallen him. The Count affected distress; Mr. Bolton was uneasy, but Julia was really unhappy. She sometimes looked at the former with an eye of suspicion, but she was too good and innocent herself to entertain her suspicions long, and he dissembled concern so well, that at length she acquitted him in her mind of any treachery towards this unhappy sufferer.—What can have happened to him? she would say to herself. May he not be detained by some business, or confined by some slight illness? It is certain that no one could have the cruelty to kill him. Perhaps he will come back by and by.—She was restless and miserable. Every moment she would inquire if any tidings of him had been received, if any letter from him had arrived. Alas! there were

no

no tidings; there was no letter. Messengers had been sent in every direction, but no trace of him had they discovered. He was lost. In this state of things she walked pensively into the Gothick chapel, and closed the door after her. She had been educated to respect the forms, and to believe the tenets of the Roman church. She devoutly observed the former and she believed implicitly in the latter.

Had Julia been a heathen, she had, nevertheless, been interesting and amiable; but as a Catholick her virtues became refined and excellent. This religion had converted her persuasion to faith, her affections to duties, her love to devotion, and her piety to adoration. Her chasteness was virginity and her mildness Christianity. She walked slowly towards the altar,

and there kneeling down, poured out the unpremeditated effusions of a pious heart.

"Heavenly Theresa! Benevolent intercessor! Look with complacency on a sinner, and despise not her prayer. Deign to hearken to my supplications, and mediate, I beseech thee, between the divine wrath and Theodore. Help me in my affliction, and preserve him from all danger. Protect him, govern him, lead him in the path of virtue, and give him, ah! give him once again in safety to my longing sight. Grant my prayer, beatified Virgin! who now lookest upon me with an aspect of benignity from thy heavenly abode, and let me not sue in vain!"

The chapel in which this prayer was offered was a place to inspire sentiments of religious fervour, to humble the pretensions

sions of human pride, to extinguish frivolity, and to dissipate the clouds of arrogance and selfishness. A venerable and awful gloom prevailed in every part of it. A deathlike silence reigned throughout. It was an artificial grove, but darker and more retired than that of Dodona. The dim rays of coloured light that entered it through the variegated casements partook of the austerity of the building. The symbols of revelation, the hallowed signs of Christian mysteries, and the sufferings of the martyrs and of their God, that every where met the eye in this consecrated spot, might awaken sentiments of piety in an apostate, or fill the atheist with terrour. A solemnity, sacred if not supernatural, marked this chapel as the abode on earth of all that man holds reverend. Involuntary respect and lowly humility, and an indefinite

inward sense of mystick importance, were inspired by it. It was the quiet mansion of the happy. It communicated with heaven. It threatened hell. Its majestick dome how lofty, how impressive! Its nave and aisles how grand, how rich, how diversified! Its altar how simple, how sublime! How beautiful is the whole, how apparently interminable are its parts!

Man of faith, kneel on that marble; look on that cross, sign of mercy, pledge of salvation! From thence to heaven is a road broad and bright. Angels, in thousands and in tens of thousands, float betwixt, carrying thy prayers to the throne of grace. In those entangled boughs of stone the tutelary saints of fallen man watch over thy safety and join in thy adoration. Beneath that roof of infinite complexity, choirs of happy souls pour forth the

the harmony of gratitude and love, and offer to thy acceptance a place in joy. Man of faith, beneath those hallowed vaults our enemy is hidden, gnashing his teeth with agony at their happiness, and seeking to seduce thee from righteousness and heaven to the path of utter and everlasting torment. Ah! shun his snares; it is Satan that invites, and if thou hearken to him, damnation will be thy lot.

Julia after her prayers sunk her forehead on her hands, and wept from tenderness and agitation. Relieved by her devotion and her tears, a gleam of joy illuminated her mind, a religious nerve thrilled through her heart, hope filled her bosom, and a pious enthusiasm seized on her imagination. She shut her eyes, clasped her hands with force, and communed in mysterious silence (her swelling lips unclosed) with

her beneficent, celestial patroness. Visions of bliss glowed on her mental sight. Rapt, inspired, a holy frenzy lifts her soul, she feels the force of supernal grace. She throws off her grosser frame. She treads the golden paths of heaven. She breathes the living gale of immortality. She is received by her sainted mother and all the blessed who sing joyful hallelujahs. Floods of eternal light burst upon her ravished spirit. She is all purity, all happiness. Her prayer is heard, her Theodore is safe.

Reformation, if properly so called, what hast thou done? Infidelity, what wouldst thou dare? Behold the virtuous, the innocent Julia. Consider her feelings at this moment, and reflect on the purity of her mind. Bethink you of her faith in the efficacy of her prayers. Forget not her reliance on the intercession of her saint,

and

and keep in recollection that she has an absolute conviction on her mind that the sanctified Theresa is present, and attends to her obsecrations. Know that her happiness at this moment surpasses what the ignorant sceptick with all his vanity, or the empty philosophist with all his petulance, is capable of conceiving. That it exceeds what the pompous Pagan in the frenzy of a fallacious faith had ever hoped to enjoy. And shall she be deprived of it? For what? To despise the forms of ancient worship, to scorn the amiable weaknesses of traditionary doctrine, to wrap herself in the phlegm of cold indifference, or yield to the pangs of dumb despair? to see in man and nature matter alone, dull and sluggish matter? To be dead to the poetry of spiritualized devotion, the sentiment of prayer, the feeling

of inspiration; to be insensible of the refined and exquisite sensuality of a mystick adoration? To be warmed by no sacred visions, to receive no angelick warnings, to be transported by no supernatural and incomprehensible ecstacies, to trust in no holy and immaterial agencies, to feel her own weakness and the helplessness of her nature, and yet to expect no providential assistance, no protection from above?—No, by Heavens! she shall preserve the religion of her fathers. She shall pour forth her vows in simplicity and love, with familiarity and gentleness, to the patroness of her youth. That patroness will hearken to her prayers and attend at her invitation, will comfort her perturbed spirit, will pardon her venial transgressions, will intercede for her heavier faults, will pour balm into her soul, and whisper consolation

tion and felicity. Divine faith! Happy, thrice happy, they who acknowledge thy supremacy!

Julia with lightened heart and chearful countenance retired from the chapel. Her alarms were quieted, her hopes were revived, her serenity was restored. She had since the adventure of the balloon observed a distant but polite manner toward the Count, and though she now felt herself unsafe and unhappy at St. Uldrich, yet she willingly assented to her father's intention to remain there till they should learn some account of Theodore. The Count for several days never left the *chateau*, his absence he thought might expose him to suspicion, but his mind was a theatre where all the angry and unamiable passions raged. He had overheard what had passed between Theodore and Julia on the morning of his

disappearance. He was therefore well aware of her sentiments, and convinced that any endeavour on his part to weaken her principles of virtue or to recommend his infamous suit by argument or sophistry, would not only be treated with contempt, but resisted as well from attachment to another as hatred to himself. Any libertine but himself would under these circumstances, have relinquished his enterprise as chimerical, absurd and impossible, but he resolved to subdue Miss Bolton or perish in the attempt. His pride as well as his profligacy was engaged, and victory must be obtained at any price.

After her devotions she passed the day in tranquillity and resignation, and immediately after supper retired to her apartment. This consisted of a bedchamber and closet; the former was hung with tapestry

pestry woven in ancient times in the looms of the *Hotel Royal* at Paris. The subject of it was an attack of cavalry made during the conquest of *Franche Comté* by Lewis the Fourteenth, from a drawing of M. Le Brun, director of the *Gobelins.* Nothing could be more brilliant than the colours, nothing more spirited than the design. The floor of the room was of marble, and covered with a rich Turkey carpet. The ceiling, which consisted of many segments of arches, was painted with art and taste; the ornaments of the room, together with the bed and the *sultan,* were of lilac and crimson. The *ruelle* of her bed, according to the French custom, was large and lofty, the *toilette* was superb, and in the closet were placed her harp, her books, her bath, her writing-desk, and a sopha.

She this evening retired unusually early.

She

She wished for privacy and to indulge in the luxury of solitude, and the presence of the Count became every moment more disagreeable to her. In addition to these motives, she found herself unwell. An uneasiness, a nervous agitation, a heat, a heaviness, had seized her. She felt no pain, she complained of no weakness, but she experienced sensations till then unknown to her. Retired to her chamber she placed herself at the window, and tried, by looking at the moon and inhaling the breeze of night, to recover her usual coolness and tranquillity. The stillness of nature at this hour, the clearness of the azure sky, the mild brightness of the luminary, all should have co-operated to quiet perturbation and restore composure. But Julia's restlessness increased. She became sleepy, and yet she was disinclined to repose. Her

cheeks

cheeks glowed with heat, her arms sunk with languor. Her thoughts, at once obscure and active, rested on Theodore. Her fancy, indistinctly fond, yielded him to her closing eyes, and she experienced the disorder or the transport of a vague and wild conception joined to a lively sensibility. She continued her endeavours to rouse herself She entered her closet. She sealed a letter for England, and seated herself on the sopha with an intention to direct it. The pen fell from her hand. Her heavy lids refused obedience to her will, and closed with resistless force the organ of sight. On the sopha she slept, but so heavily as if she were no more to wake, and in her sleep such dreams seized her unquiet mind as never before disturbed her. So ardent, so tumultuous were they, that her tongue moved in incoherent

incoherent distraction, and her limbs stretched with involuntary and morbid energy.

But no dream however vivid, no motion however violent, had the power to rouse her from her lethargy. Nay, had force been employed for that purpose, it would not probably have availed. In her ravings the most revolting images presented themselves, but surely the purity of her mind did not, from these unspontaneous wanderings, become less admirable or less immaculate. The intention it is that decides human virtue and human culpability, and at the awful day of judgment, mild will be the accusation against those who have transgressed involuntarily or by compulsion.

Sometimes she would seem to herself to relinquish the sober precepts of her youth,

and to smile with thoughtless complacency at the derelictions of propriety; but the remorse that would immediately follow was painful and terrible. Her father, she fancied, offered to conduct her into a scene of repose and happiness, but with a criminal and unaccountable inconsistence, she rejected his assistance, and courted the shocking objects of her dread and danger. Sometimes she would see the Count, hardened in impudence and debauchery, present to her view a front of boldness and libertinism, at the same time that he outraged her ears with the most insulting professions of his odious passion. Pollution, she thought, attended on his touch, and ruin hung upon his eye. Against the presumption of his manner she tried to frown, to shriek, but her muscles refused their office, her rebellious organ denied a sound,

and

and she seemed to suffer a total revolt of her limbs and senses.

At a late hour next day she was awakened by Mademoiselle De Sagoné. She opened her eyes with that feeling of horrour and alarm that a person under the pressure of a heavy calamity, or the sentence of a severe punishment, or stung by an accusing conscience for an atrocious crime, may be supposed to experience when roused suddenly from sleep and a dismal dream. Mademoiselle De Sagoné was a young lively brunette, between whom and Julia there subsisted a great intimacy. At the pressing solicitations of the former, who in consequence of early prejudice never slept alone, they had the day before agreed to occupy the same bed while they should remain in the *chateau*. "Is it possible," said she in French, "Julia, that you passed the night in

in this closet? I laid down at an early hour in your chamber, thinking that you would soon join me, but from your present appearance I should suppose you did not undress at all. For my part, I have had such a shocking time of it since I fell asleep, and I have been tormented with such horrid dreams, that my head is at this moment ready to split."—"*'Tis so with me,*" replied Julia. "*I have lain here in a sort of trance all night,* and I find a confusion in my thoughts that cannot be described. My stomach, too, is much disordered."—"It is very strange," returned the other; "we must certainly have taken something at supper that disagreed with us." Her suspicion was just. They both had suffered from the same cause, for each had tasted of a *bouillon,* which was intended by the Count for Miss Bolton alone. *Mademoiselle De Sagoné,*

Sagoné, being of a robust constitution, felt little immediate injury from it, and she was able in a few minutes to dress for breakfast; but Julia, whose health and frame were delicate, found it necessary to remain in her apartment during the day.

Languid and dejected she endeavoured in vain, when left alone, to call to her recollection the course of her wanderings, the detail of her ravings. The impression they had left was deep, but dark, and all she knew was that she had been agitated, affrighted, tortured, to a degree and in a manner beyond her waking conception.

What could be the cause of such terrible effects? she asked herself, what had she eaten, what had she drank, that could have occasioned her illness, that could have produced a sleep, a trance rather, so profound, so fearful, so preternatural? Her meditations

meditations were indistinct but terrifying. She had heard of the vampire and the hag of night, and she had read of incubus and incantation. Witchcraft and drugs, the philtres of vitious love, and the imps of perdition, opiates, charms, and conjurations, passed in a rapid and revolting series through her thoughts. A deadly fear seized her heart, a cold perspiration bedewed her frame.

Addressing herself to the Virgin, and kissing her golden crucifix, she implored the assistance of Heaven, and besought the protection of that Providence which never forsakes the virtuous. Her faith prevailed. Her mind once more resumed its happy serenity, and when her father visited her, which he did after she had bathed and taken some tea, she was able to speak to him with composure. Her mental disorder gradually

dually subsided. The clouds of her heavy sleep were insensibly dispersed; and the clearness of her intellect was restored.

Mr. Bolton, whose love for his daughter could only be equalled by his paternal attention, with delight observed the amendment in her looks, and remained with her most of the day. She did not venture to quit her apartment till towards evening, when, leaning on his arm, she took a short walk in the demain. The warmth of the air, the quietness of the scene, the presence of her father, the warbling of the birds, and perhaps the languor of her own frame, all contributed to produce that chearful resignation, that luxury of sentiment, which transports humanity to the confines of Heaven. She looked at her father with an expression of attachment and innocence, she thought of his uniform

tenderness

tenderness with gratitude, and a tear of sensibility glistened in each eye. She recollected that awful moment when her pious mother departed for a better world, and she recalled to her memory the last look of Theodore. Buried in these thoughts, and absent in mind, the Count suddenly met them. Beneath his mask of politeness, a feeling of wicked triumph was discernible, while his enquiries about her health were delivered in a tone, and with a look, that brought to her recollection some of the horrours of her dream. She blushed, she faltered, she sunk upon her father, and would have fallen but for his assistance. Having recovered a little, the Count offered her his arm. Leaning on both, her head stooping, and her eyes cast down, she entered the *chateau*, and immediately retired to her apartment.

Mademoiselle

Mademoiselle De Sagoné, alarmed by what she had suffered the night before in Julia's apartment, determined to lie during her stay at the *chateau*, in the chamber of her mother the *Marquise*. Miss Bolton now, the first time in her life, was apprehensive of sleeping alone; she wished much that Ellen, her English servant, should place a bed in her room, but she dreaded expressing such a wish, lest she should excite a greater alarm in her father's breast respecting her health than what he already felt, and she could not keep Ellen with her without his knowledge. She determined, therefore, to remain alone as usual.

As soon as her father left her at night, she secured her door more carefully than usual, and with a candle in her hand proceeded to survey every corner of her apartment. New fears and vague suspicions disturbed

disturbed her mind, producing an excessive and perhaps useless caution. Her closet was wainscotted all round with solid oak, its ceiling was arched with stone, and its floor was marble. The ceiling and floor of her bedchamber were of similar materials, and its sides were covered with tapestry. The tapestry was, she soon discovered, attached by silver nails to a wooden wainscot, which in every part returned a sound of steady solidity, and immovable weight. It was almost certain, then, that there was no place of concealment, no secret door, either in the chamber or the closet. To render her investigation decisive of security, she placed some pieces of furniture, one over another, in the latter, and standing on the uppermost one, she with the end of an iron key, obtained demonstration of the reality of its

stone ceiling. It was plaistered and painted, but there was no deception. She next examined her windows, but they were well secured. Her scrutiny was performed slowly and carefully, and it had now employed her two hours; but not yet satisfied, she proceeded to try the roof of her chamber in the same manner that she had proved that of the closet, and in one place she thought a hollow sound was returned.

The part that she thought yielded this sound was one of the many sections of elliptical arches that supported the superstructure. It was painted like the rest, and in no respect differed from them in appearance, but striking it with more force, and comparing the noise with that which was returned from each of the other segments, she had no longer a doubt that there was a vacancy above it. Could any thing

be

be more terrifying than such a discovery? Her sight acquired new sharpness, her hearing new delicacy. She pushed against the suspected spot, but it was immovable. She viewed it, felt it, and it betrayed no deceit, but she sounded it and it was hollow.

The subject painted on it was the apparition evoked by the hag of Endor for Saul. The ground was black, and along the edge of the witch's drapery, she, at length, by dint of examination, discovered something like a crevice. Having got another candle to assist her sight, Julia succeeded in tracing this crevice through other dark parts of the picture, till she discovered what she considered a door of irregular shape. It was about four feet long and its widest part was about two feet. No eye but that of fear could have discovered

it. She next searched for hinges, and found them at one end, when, pushing with all her strength against the other end, it yielded. It is a secret door, it opens.

Julia had no sooner reduced her suspicions respecting it to certainty, than she descended with precipitation to the floor, left her candles on her *toilette*, and flew to her chamber door. This she unlocked hastily, and then rushed into the corridor. All was silent. All was black. She trembled in every joint. Her teeth chattered. Unable to stand, she sunk upon her knees. Whither should she fly? She knew not the way to her father's apartment. She knew not Ellen's room, nor that of her friend *Mademoiselle De Sagoné*. To advance were as terrible as to retreat. To traverse by herself and in the dead of the night a gloomy pile of building, to involve herself in

in the intricacies of its various windings, to lose herself in the labyrinth of its complicated apartments, was horrible in the extreme. To take a candle in her hand and by loud cries awake all its inhabitants was the first measure that occurred to her, but, alas! she wanted courage even to breathe, and were it to save her life, she durst not disturb the universal stillness by the slightest noise. As Julia deliberates, now about to rise from her knees, her head inclined, her hands extended, her mouth half open, a distant sound, like that of a step of a man who seeks to escape observation, reaches her ear. Her heart beats violently. It is a step. It strikes against something in the dark. She wishes to cry "who's there?" but her voice absolutely fails her. She retreats to her room, the door of which still remained open. Her knees knock one

against the other. She is nearly dead with fright. With difficulty she enters her room, and as she is about to close the door, the sound of a suppressed sneeze from an adjoining gallery distinctly strikes her ear. A shriek of terrour escapes from her, and she has just force enough left to lock herself in, when throwing herself on the *sultan*, and looking, scarcely alive, at the dreadful door in the ceiling, she remains gasping and motionless, expecting every instant to see it opened by the nefarious Count. She continues to gaze on it for a considerable length of time. It stirs not. She hears no noise, and her heart by degrees beats with less violence. In this situation Julia remained, vigilant and fearful, till the blushes of Aurora streaked the east. The splendour and the chearfulness of morning revived in some degree her exhausted

hausted spirits, and dispelled much of her alarm. She placed herself at one of her windows, still looking at the treacherous door, till, at length, she insensibly sunk into a slumber. From this she was awakened by Ellen. She felt herself little refreshed, but not so ill as she had been the morning before.

She deliberated with herself about the discovery she had made. Should she tell her father of it, and conceal all she knew besides? The only consequence would be, she feared, a change of apartment. Should she disclose to him what had occurred in the balloon, and the terrours of her dream, what mischiefs would she not have to apprehend? His safety might be endangered, and perhaps her own innocence rendered questionable. In short, what evil was there that might not be dreaded from the cou-

rage, the arts, and the villainy of the Count? It was a subject of great importance and one that required much deliberation. She could think of no mode of proceeding that was not objectionable. She found herself unable to come to a final determination, and all she could resolve on, for the present, was never again to remain for a night by herself in her present apartment, and to leave the *chateau* as soon as she possibly could.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Era lo loco, ove a scendar la riva
Venimmo, alpestro, e per quel ch' iv' er' anco,
Tal, ch' ogni vista ne sarebbe schiva.
.....
Qual' è quella ruina, che nel fianco
Di qua da Trento l'Adice percosse,
O per tremuoto, o per sostegno manco.
.....
Il giovinetto con piedi, e con braccia
Percotendo venia l' orribil' onde.

Theodore awoke after a sleep of ten hours. He felt violent pains in his head; his chest, back and sides were much contused, and every muscle in his body had a sensation of soreness. He remained motionless for some time endeavouring to collect his scattered thoughts, and to call to his mind the strange and shocking events of the day before. The romantick appearance and uncommon splendour of his grotesque apart-

ment, the extraordinary cruelty that had been exercised on him, and his apparently miraculous preservation were so unlike reality, so far removed from the probable, that for some time he doubted if he were awake, or if all these things were not the illusions of a disordered imagination. He listened with surprise and apprehension to the hollow noises of echoed waterfalls, that for ever reverberated through the subterranean chambers. He moved his eyes to prove to himself that he actually saw. His organ of smelling he employed to determine the fragrance of the air he breathed. He passed his hands over different parts of his body to ascertain that he really felt, and he would have stirred his feet but for a heavy chain that confined them. He is not in a dream, his senses are all awake. It is too true that he is the wretched victim

of

of unprecedented depravity, and that the acute pains he feels are those of unprecedented suffering. He recollects being precipitated into the abyss, and the horrible shock that bereft him of animation. Of all that passed afterwards he is utterly ignorant. As he ponders upon his unhappy situation, and looks with astonishment at the glittering decorations of the cavern, now illuminated with wax candles, the sound of a guitar in a low and plaintive movement, accompanied by a delicate female voice, strikes his ear. It is an Italian air that he had often sung himself. He turns his head to see the musician, and beholds Marie de Solase in an elegant undress standing near his bed-side. She had heightened her natural charms with *rouge*. Her hair of the finest texture and of a glossy black, was turned in an antique wreath

and secured by a silver comb. One small foot appeared in a *mule de chambre* of white satin, and her hands and arms, of admirable shape and colour, were gracefully employed upon her instrument.

He who regards the Medicean Venus as the standard of female perfection, would perhaps have thought Marie too fat, but such was the justness of her proportions, such the clearness of her skin, such the springiness of every muscle and the firmness of each swelling surface, that singular and fastidious must he be who could refuse to her the praise of beauty. Theodore's pains were for a moment forgotten by him. His eyes were dazzled by the lustre of the object before him. Who can this be? thought he. Whither have I been transported? What am I to suppose? If I were superstitious I should believe that I was under

under the influence of enchantment, but in truth my senses are still so confused, my mind so bewildered, that I in vain seek to reconcile the horrours of my recollection with the wonders that now engage me. In vain I endeavour to account for my preservation or to develop the mystery that attends it. She, perceiving that he was awake, and reading astonishment in his countenance, suspended her performance and summoned to her features all the tenderness they could assume. "You are here, Sir," said she with counterfeited embarrassment, "a prisoner, and I am appointed your gaoler, but never was gaoler less harsh than you shall find me, or less inclined to inflict the miseries of confinement. Alas! a prisoner myself, I feel too severely the cruelty of captivity not to endeavour to mitigate

gate your affliction." Here she put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Lovely and amiable apparition," replied Theodore, "I feel that to you I am indebted for life; oh! tell me how I have been conveyed to this brilliant grotto. What have I to expect? what to think? and that my gratitude may not be silent, confirm my opinion that you are the preserver of my being."—"The offices of humanity, Sir," said she "deserve little praise. You were conveyed hither by your inexorable and merciless foe, the Count D'Egfryd—you were chained by him to that rock, and left speechless and insensible. At the risk of offending him, I placed you, as soon as he departed, in the situation in which you now find yourself, and by continuing my cares I hope soon to see you perfectly restored."

—"Oh

—"Oh my God, my God!" cried he, "what a barbarian! His perfidy, his violence, his atrocity, flash across my memory, and with them *the grave:* ah! was I not precipitated into that horrible abyss? how then have I escaped death?"

"'Twere long to explain this to you now, Sir; another time you shall know all. At present you must take some refreshment that I have prepared for you." With these words she left him. In her absence he endeavoured to rise, but he soon found that he was too weak and too sore to quit his bed. He, therefore, having raised himself a little, sunk back upon his pillow and there remained motionless and patient.

In two days he was much recovered. No invalid could be better attended. Marie

was assiduous and tender, and never was nurse more vigilant or kind. Gratitude and admiration on his part, and on hers the artifices of accomplished seduction, rendered them in a short time intimate. Companions in misery, inhabitants of the same dungeon, each fled naturally from the comfortless and forlorn prospect of their unhappy fate, and sought for consolation in the presence of the other. She communicated to him all the arrangements of the Count. His detestable principles, his skill in the use of narcoticks and other drugs. His mode of descent to the cavern, his precautions, his perverse propensities, his inextinguishable malignity. She represented herself as a victim to his libertinism and treachery, aided, as she said, by some infernal philtre, and she bewailed her

weakness

weakness with such well-acted remorse that Theodore's compassion was powerfully excited.

"Do not," he would say, "my fair and tender friend, do not indulge such unavailing sorrow. You were unfortunate to be exposed to the arts of such a monster, you are unhappy, but who shall dare to call you criminal? shall the delicate and disinterested sensibility of an inexperienced female, shall her amiable credulity, shall the fond and innocent wanderings of her imagination, shall the gentle acquiescence of her manners, her habitual and feminine submission, suspicious of no guile and incapable of energy save in efforts to oblige, shall these virtues be converted into instruments for her seduction by the insidious corrupter, be construed into weakness, or deemed tokens of levity or looseness? Forbid

Forbid it, Heaven! no, let the hard unyielding disposition of the suspicious prudent matron, the repelling austerity of mortified temperament or inveterate dissimulation, the practised caution of crafty intrigue or dubious character; let unfeeling indifference and masculine resistance, and the bosom of marble from which avarice and vanity have excluded all the soft and kindly feelings, meet the approbation of the silly and the prejudiced, and receive the homage of ignorance and stupidity. But truth and compassion, justice and virtue, will ever whisper consolation to contrite frailty, and extend their benign protection to the lovely and weeping penitent. Be comforted, my amiable preserver. Ah! who that knows the Count, but knows him to be irresistible? Can the tender lamb escape from the rapacious wolf?

wolf? The chicken from the kite? Be comforted. You have committed no crime, but you have suffered injuries greater than profligacy unaided by the depraved refinements of vitious seduction, could have inflicted. To consider your accomplishments, to behold your charms, and to think of your destiny, the sternest censor would pity, not condemn; and for me, I admire, I respect, and I applaud."

By degrees she suffered herself to be consoled into apparent tranquillity, while Theodore's regard for her every moment increased; but his heart was already engaged. He could not love her, nay, were he without attachment, he felt that he could never entertain for her any sentiment but that of friendship. He reflected on his own disposition and he examined hers, but the cause of this phenomenon he could

could not discover. His principles were established and his taste was formed. Which of the former was not possessed, in what respect was not the latter gratified by Marie? She spoke, she sang well; her good sense was conspicuous, her manners were correct, and her information was extensive. She hath, thought he, a cultivated understanding and a humane heart, an even temper, a graceful address; what then does she require to render her amiable? Why am I sensible of a disparity between us? In what particular is she deficient, or has nature intended her for a situation in society more refined or more elevated than any to which I could arrive?

In truth he could look, or he thought he could look at her figure with as much tranquillity as if it had been sculptured in marble. He was sensible of its charms, but he

he was indifferent to them. The regularity and beauty of her face struck him as uncommon and admirable, but from the expression of her brilliant eyes his soul involuntarily revolted. He had been served by her most materially, he had been attended by her most kindly, he was obliged and grateful, and he therefore could not feel antipathy to her; but at her countenance he looked as seldom as politeness would permit. There was that in it which was not only uncongenial and foreign to his nature, but which even filled him with uneasiness. How different was she from Miss Bolton! On Julia's sweet and gentle face he could gaze for hours, and grow fonder as he gazed. Conversing with her all perturbation was quieted, all unhappiness forgotten. Oh, the delight to look at and admire her, to hear her and forget every other

other object! Let me return to her for a moment.

She was during his absence truly wretched. Her anxiety for him and her horrour of the Count deprived her of ease, robbed her of rest and comfort, and even injured her health. On the morning after the discovery of the secret door, she had, with Ellen's assistance, fastened it so securely with nails and small wooden wedges, that it was no longer to be dreaded. But she would not again sleep alone in this apartment. After much deliberation she invented an excuse for having a second bed removed to it, and Ellen, who was at once resolute and affectionate, became her protector.

But this is a digression. By degrees Marie de Solase recovered her chearfulness. "To you," said she to Theodore one evening

ing when he was nearly recovered, " I am indebted for my present contentment. What magick in your words and presence to cause forgetfulness of shame, happiness so long unknown, and feelings of self-respect! Truth and honour are inseparable from your sentiments, and absolution from you I receive almost as a pledge of divine remission. Ah! how could I support the humiliation of your contempt, the terrour of your condemnation? No, I feel that your regard is necessary to my existence. There is in your character what demands my reverence, and may I flatter myself that now in your looks I see that which may confirm my acquittal? I shall henceforth study to deserve your friendship. Possessing this, my gloomy cavern will appear the abode of felicity and joy: the prospect of my future life be illuminated with

with sunshine: no cares will molest, no fears disturb me. And you the cause of such happy changes will sometimes, perhaps, testify your approbation by a smile."

They were sitting on a sopha near the mouth of the cavern. The last rays of the setting sun gilt with softened lustre its sparry roof. The sky was variegated with the splendour of the hour, the season, and the climate. A fresh breeze from the sea produced a delightful coolness, and now, for the first time, *the grave* seemed to Theodore to relinquish its horrours for beauty and for pleasure.

All the animation of Marie's character enlivened her countenance. "How little do you know me," said he, "if you suppose it possible I could be insensible to your perfections, or capable of the cruelty of reproach or inattention! It is true that before

before I saw you I engaged my heart to another, but does this require me to be blind to beauty such as your's, or unsusceptible of the tenderness that you inspire? Ah! too lovely woman, in vain I would struggle to resist your charms. I feel a passion that must be love from its warmth and its force. In the contemplation of that admirable figure, of that commanding countenance, I forget all former impressions, all my present misfortunes, and revel in new and delicious transports. Other women may gain conquests and may captivate, but it is for you alone to strike and to inflame with the first glance. This hand alone were sufficient to thaw the frost of ninety, but to contemplate the numberless beauties of that perfect form, the elastick plumpness of that arm, and that neck, the clearness of that skin, the matchless delicacy of that foot!

Ah! in mercy hide those eyes, their lustre is intolerable."

In a fatal moment virtue and Julia were forgotten, and the amiable, the grateful, the unsuspicious Theodore became false and criminal.

Marie de Solase was in hourly expectation of a visit from the Count, and she made such arrangements in the cavern, that when he came he should not perceive any marks of her tenderness or attention to Theodore. She knew that her dogs would always give her intimation of his approach ten or twelve minutes at least before his appearance, and she contrived matters so as that she could, in this short space of time, make the prisoner appear to have no other protection against the hardness of the rock and the cold than a few blankets. The chain which had secured his legs was fastened

tened by a lock, that she had the ingenuity to remove, and she instructed him how to replace it speedily in such a way as that no one could suspect it had been opened. Thus he was enabled to move about his subterranean dungeon, and at night, when there was little danger of a visit from the Count, he would sometimes amuse himself by exploring its recesses.

A frequent subject of his thoughts and of his conversations with Marie was the possibility of escaping from the cavern. To make a rope of all the bed-clothes and other suitable materials, which being secured above might reach to the sea, was the idea that first occurred to him; but this would be, he soon perceived, a vain attempt. To be strong enough to bear his weight it could not be made sufficiently long, as the cavern was many hundred feet above the surface of the water. To attack the Count

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on his arrival and throw him over the ledge, was another project that presented itself, but this his new acquaintance showed him would be to expose themselves to certain destruction, for who but the Count could, holding only a single rope, swing into the abyss, and climb up by such a perilous, slender and unsteady mode of ascent? The consequence of the Count's death would be that they must both inevitably perish where they were. To make signs of distress, and throw down letters stating their situation, was at one time proposed by Theodore.—"Ah!" said Marie, "so long as I have been here never did I see a vessel sufficiently near to convey to it a signal from hence, and we might fling down a thousand letters secured in bottles or by any other mode you might devise, every one of which would in all probability be for ever lost among the

the rocks, and currents, and caves, and whirlpools, of these tempestuous vaults."

"Does no mode present itself," cried Theodore, "by which even the possibility of escape might be obtained? Might not some perpendicular fissure of these rocks be widened and continued even to the light of day?"—Marie shook her head.—"I understand you," said he, "a mass of stone of immeasurable thickness lies between us and heaven. But the stream in the inner cavern, could not that be followed? Who can tell whither it flows? perhaps if I were to try, it might conduct me hence in safety; your deliverance would follow of course."—"You are still too weak to attempt so desperate an enterprize," replied she. "Think of nothing now but the restoration of your strength."—"You are right I believe," returned he

with a sigh: but his impatience to escape grew every hour more violent, and the assiduities of Marie became soon little less irksome and disagreeable to him than the gloomy confinement of the cavern.

But her attachment to him was so strong and so disinterested, her endeavours to please were so conciliatory and so flattering, that he could not bring himself for an instant to treat her with distance or indifference. When at times his sense of fidelity gave to his manner an appearance of formality or reserve, the effect on her countenance was sudden and distressing, and she appeared so very unhappy that he more than once accused himself as a barbarian. He thought her an unfortunate interesting woman, who had preserved his life, and who was entitled to every return of gratitude and sensibility. Thus the strictness of his principles

principles and the tenderness of his disposition produced that, which no seduction had otherwise affected.

His thoughts were involved in gloom, he apprehended some dreadful issue to his adventure. Murder in its worst shape and Count Egfryd appeared constantly before him. On Julia he thought incessantly, but he never expected to see her again. His attention to *Manon* he still continued, and while he was employed in cleansing its cage and supplying it with food, he would sometimes, for an instant, lose his wretched situation in the remembrance of those delicious moments he had passed with its mistress. It still formed a point of union between him and her, and now it was the only comfort he possessed.

Theodore had read and reflected much, and his invention was equal to his know-

ledge. The use to which the species of pigeon, called carrier, had been often applied, was not unknown to him, and it occurred to him that Manon might be employed as a messenger to Miss Bolton. The thought when it struck him filled him with inexpressible joy. The first conception of a new project, though absurd or impracticable, is always delightful. To discover its imperfections or its difficulties requires reflection, and reflection requires time. Meanwhile hope is engaged and the imagination amused. The sagacity of all birds is so great, and their attachment to their young so powerful, that he entertained the most sanguine expectation that the little goldfinch, liberated from his cage, would fly to Manette, be seen and examined by Julia, and be the bearer to her of a billet. He instantly communicated his project

project to his companion. She afraid of losing him, and likewise afraid of being apprehended and consequently executed for her crimes, determined to oppose his intention.

" I am surprised," said she, " you could entertain such a hope; do you suppose that a bird in pain and terrour, and kept from the view of all surrounding objects by your clothes as you came hither, would be able to regain its nest at such a distance? No, believe me it will fail in the attempt, and will perish in consequence of the disuse and forgetfulness of its natural habits. Do not I pray you wantonly sacrifice the beautiful little creature."—" You are ignorant, my friend," answered he, " of the powers of birds. They possess a sagacity or an instinct of which we can form no idea. There are instances of pigeons carrying

letters more than a thousand miles, and in trying this experiment I do that which it is possible may effect our release. It may be of service, it can do no harm. Let me therefore have pen, ink and paper."—"No, really," replied she abruptly, "it must not be. I am determined Manon shall remain here."

As she spoke the violence of her temper and the blackness of her character became partly visible. Theodore shuddered as he examined her frown—"Why now, really, *Madame*, you are unreasonable. We are here in a miserable situation. The project I propose may rescue us from it, and yet you oppose it. Do not," added he with a smile, "make me suppose you are a confederate with the Count."—"Suppose what you please, Sir, but in this I must not be opposed."—"Nay, nay, this is foolish.

ish. Come, give me pen, ink and paper, and let us finish our ridiculous altercation." —"I will not give you pen, ink nor paper; you shall not write to that impertinent Miss Bolton, nor shall this troublesome bird molest me any longer." These words had scarcely escaped her when she seized the little cage, and with a violent effort threw it out of the cavern. It fell on the extreme border of the ledge. Another inch and Julia's favourite had fallen into the gulph.

Theodore grew pale. He flew to recover it and returned to Marie. Undisguised fury inflamed her countenance. The deformity of her character was legible in every feature of her face. Theodore would perhaps, at this moment, have less regretted her loss than that of Manon. His attention to her had first arisen from a principle

of gratitude, and his sanguine complexion had too readily yielded to her seduction; but he now regarded her with aversion. He felt remorse at his own immorality. His seducer was unamiable, indelicate and unfeminine. He had penetrated much of her character, and it filled him with disgust. He was shocked and enraged at her present action. He looked at her with disapprobation and contempt, but he said not a word. He felt that his language would be impolite if not intemperate, and he had sufficient command of himself to resist his inclination to express his thoughts. He put the cage in his bosom, and proceeded in silence and without opposition, for she saw that this would be fruitless, to procure materials for writing. These obtained, he went with a light into the most retired cavity of his dungeon. Marie burned with

jealousy,

jealousy, revenge and disappointment.—"You shall repent this," said she as he was retiring. Her menace was terrible. The attitude in which it was delivered, the tone in which it was uttered, the merciless and malignant look with which it was accompanied, might alarm the most courageous. He was moved by it. He felt a dread that he, who was naturally brave, could not explain; a new and complicated mischief, the offspring of perfidy, malice and assassination, appeared in shapeless terrours before his imagination; though indistinct it threatened and it terrified. In this agitated state of mind, but unmoved from his purpose, he sat down and wrote on a small piece of paper the following.

"If this shall reach you I may yet be happy. On this slender

chance, alas, how slender! depends my release from a situation shocking to humanity. If you receive not this paper, a captivity without hope must be my wretched lot, aggravated by cruelty, and to be terminated by my murder. But if it reach you, my chains will be broken, despair will no longer fill my bosom, happiness will once again visit me, and again I shall behold you. *If!* Oh sad and dreadful word! Thy coldness freezes my soul, thy uncertainty tortures me with the anxiousness of death. Know, dearest and most respected of women, that your friend, the unhappy Theodore, now languishes in a frightful cavern, from which all escape without your assistance is impossible. The cavern is in the fatal *grave*, about one hundred feet below the iron ring that is at the verge of the gulph

near

near the hut. Hither that monster Egfryd by violence and treachery has conveyed me. Need I say more? Recollect that all escape without your assistance is impossible, and save me.

To Miss Bolton, 28th of June."

This he tied to Manon's foot, and advancing with him to the ledge, he dismissed him on his errand. The poor bird was frightened and undecided. He would have returned into the cavern and his cage, but Theodore scared him away with a handkerchief. At last he mounted and flew speedily out of sight. Theodore returned to his fellow-prisoner, whose ill-humour he endeavoured, in vain, to remove. She who of late had studied his wants and who had even insisted on the drudgery of washing for

for him, now with characteristical inconsistency avoided his looks and his conversation, and would not even deign to listen to him. Vexed and uneasy, he left her, and in order to remove himself as far as possible from her, he (being now quite recovered from the effects of the violence lately practised on him) determined to explore the passage in which was the stream of water. This was the only one to the extremity of which he had not already gone.

It was a wide and lofty vault, rugged, black and terrifying. Here the murmuring of the water, echoed from a thousand arches, inspired awe. Here the dampness of the air produced a sensation of chilliness and a smell of unwholesomeness, that nothing but the dread of Marie, or a hope of liberty, could tempt the most curious

adventurer

adventurer to encounter. Having supplied himself with two light boards, and leaving his clothes on the rock, Theodore committed himself to the stream. It carried him a considerable distance in his desperate voyage, and as it advanced became more rapid. At length the increased noise of waves, and of a waterfall not far distant, admonished him to use all his caution. He determined, therefore, to follow the left bank, and to go no farther than it should afford him means of holding by his hands. He threw away his boards as useless, for he had brought them merely to float him down the stream without the trouble of swimming. He now depended entirely on his powers of feeling, for his organ of vision was here quite useless. He was in utter and profound darkness, and he was even ignorant of the situation of the spot from

from which he had proceeded. But he knew that the left bank would conduct him back to it, though perhaps with considerable delay, obliquity and danger. The stream grew impetuous, but still a lengthened and elevated ledge of the rock afforded him a protection against its force, as it enabled him to keep his head and shoulders above the torrent. He persisted in his rash endeavour, but his body was benumbed by the cold water, and his senses confounded by the strange and deafening noises around him. These noises grew louder, and at the same time, as he followed the ledge, his feet touched a hard substance.

A few steps more and he is on a smooth stone, but it is a narrow shelf of which the sides rise beyond his reach. It is about fourteen inches in breadth. Its edge is sharp,

sharp, and beneath it at a depth, perhaps unfathomable, he hears a noise of a thousand cataracts, louder than the loudest thunders of the torrid zone, tumbling impetuously, and roaring with infernal violence among the rocky passages below. A spray like a heavy shower of rain falls upon him. Torrent against torrent, gulph within gulph, horrour on horrour, blackness and solitude, despair and death, interminable extent, incalculable ruin, and a depth to the very bowels of the earth; all that experience can furnish of most perilous, all that the imagination can supply of most dreadful, what man avoids, and what nature hides, were there.

Theodore, astounded and trembling, hastened to return, but the treacherous slate on which he stood, yielding to his weight, sunk into the abyss. He followed

it,

it, recommending his soul to mercy, and expecting a frightful and instantaneous dissolution.

By one of those involuntary and instinctive acts practised by all animals in danger, he extended his arms as he was falling, and caught most providentially, a remaining portion of the ledge. The fear of an immediate and horrible death gave him new strength; he not only supported himself, but by his efforts he soon gained a spot of comparative security.

Fully sensible of the imminent danger and the inutility of his enterprize, he proceeded with all possible expedition to regain the first cavern along the left bank. Again he entered the water, again was benumbed, but in a severer manner than before, and ere he had gotten half way, he found that he was utterly unable to proceed

ceed further. A convenient place for resting himself fortunately presented itself, and he took advantage of it. It was a hollow in the bank above the water. He climbed into it, and, advancing a few steps, threw himself on the ground. A few minutes rest was all he required. But such was the wetness and incommodiousness of the place, that, notwithstanding his unwillingness to move, he found himself necessitated to enter more deeply into the recess. He did so. He advanced yet a little further, when the soft impending mass, disturbed by his motions, fell upon him with a mountain's weight, and buried him alive in an untimely and abhorred sepulchre.

It was evening, and the barking of the dogs in the outer cavern announced the Count's approach. Twelve days had now elapsed

elapsed since his visit with Theodore. He enters and is accosted by Marie with vehemence and precipitation. She, in as few words as it was possible to convey her meaning, told him of the means employed by the prisoner, who she said had broken his chains, to inform Miss Bolton of his situation. Her information was a dagger-blow to Egfryd's hopes and revenge. No sooner did he hear of Manon having been despatched with a letter, and sooner than the information was concluded, than he rushed into the inner cavern, with a cocked pistol in his hand, intending, no doubt, to murder Theodore. But he was not to be found. Being informed of the cause of his absence, the Count looked at Marie with distrust, but staid not to say a word.

Having regained the ledge, he seized his rope, dashed into the abyss, and climbed up

up the edge of the impending rock. His object was to see Manon (if it should return to its nest) before Miss Bolton saw it. Having this object, he gained the *chateau* with the greatest possible expedition. It was two o'clock in the morning when he arrived there. All was still and pitchy. He immediately provided himself with a dark-lantern and went softly to her door, but this was locked. He then, by a concealed portal in the sacristy, entered a close vault that led to a dark passage. This passage conducted by narrow and winding stairs to that secret opening in the roof of her chamber, which was concealed by the painting of the witch of Endor's drapery. The dark passage was well known to him. He had stolen through it, and into her apartment, on the night of her extraordinary trance, and he would, perhaps, have afterwards

afterwards repeated the audacious intrusion, but that he discovered she had obtained the protection of Ellen. However, his present object was so important, the danger threatened was so imminent, that he was to be restrained by no such consideration, but to his extreme disappointment and surprise, the mysterious door now for the first time opposed all his endeavours to open it. He employed his strength and his dexterity equally in vain. Frustrated in his intention, he retired and procured a long ladder from a part of the *chateau* that was under repair. He raised the ladder to her windows thinking to enter there, but again he was disappointed, for they were so well fastened on the inside that he could not, with his utmost efforts, force them open. Thus baffled in every attempt he was compelled to retire.

What

What would he not have done, what would he not have dared, to prevent her from seeing Manon?

The poor bird had, in about an hour and a half after it was despatched, flown in at her window and joined its Manette. Julia had just entered her apartment for the night when she heard its notes, which she could well distinguish from those of the other. Her astonishment was equal to her joy. She flew to its nest, welcomed it back with delight, and examined it with tenderness. Its broken limb was the first object of her attention, and the billet at its foot the next. But what was her consternation and horrour on reading it! She instantly ran to her father, showed it to him, mentioned the dangers and the misery she had experienced since her arrival at the *chateau*, the circumstance of the

balloon, the alarming discovery of the hidden door in her ceiling, and her sleepless and watchful nights since that discovery; and she implored him, as he valued her safety and the preservation of Theodore, to fly with her that moment to Bourdeaux.

Mr. Bolton did not want energy; he instantly ordered his servants and his carriage, but in such a manner as that the *Comtesse D'Egfryd* should not be apprized of his intention. In half an hour Miss Bolton and he left the *chateau*, and not having time to remove their property, they took the keys of their apartments with them.

When the Count found he could not gain admission into Julia's room through the window, he returned to her door, and impatient of any more delay, burst it open with a violent effort. This done he flew

to

to the little glass house, and there to his dread and confusion saw the hated bird without the billet. The apartment he perceives is empty. He is instantly sensible of all that has happened, but his coolness does not desert him. He calls up Guiscard his confidential servant, and from him he learns that Mr. Bolton and his daughter left the *chateau* in their carriage, for Bourdeaux, at ten o'clock, attended by their servants.

"Saddle me my fleetest horse," cried he impatiently. Never before did he feel terrour. His reputation, his consequence, his happiness, his liberty, his existence, all were in danger. Having mounted, he flew rather than rode to Bourdeaux, and was there not long after the arrival of Mr. Bolton. Knowing his hotel, he easily found him, and, with an air of sprightly

familiarity, thus accosted him in the presence of his daughter.

"Mr. Bolton, how comes this? Why have you deserted us in this manner? May I indulge the hope that you purpose to return to the *chateau?* And you, *Mademoiselle,* to consent to the flight!"—"Look you, Count Egfryd," said Mr. Bolton interrupting him, "this volatile manner ill becomes you. Theodore Dalbert must be liberated, and if there are laws in France you shall be punished." The Count, who till now would have confessed nothing, lest he should have betrayed himself unnecessarily, replied coolly and unmoved, "I perceive, Sir, you have learned where Mr. Dalbert is confined, and I can read in your countenance that you believe all that has been written and said against me. I expect, therefore, no favour from you, I require none.

none. I admit that he is a prisoner, and that he became such by perfidy and force. But what is your remedy? You apply to the magistracy of Bourdeaux. They hear you with doubt because they regard me with respect, and with difficulty you gain an order to have the cavern searched. In the mean time you and your agents are exposed to the effects of my power and my vengeance; and when you get the order, should you live to obtain it, how is it to be executed? who will visit the prison in *the grave*, or how can it be entered? Mr. Bolton, you are a worthy, sensible man. Relinquish all prejudice and passion. Attempt no hostile proceeding. Be discreet and silent, and Theodore shall be surrendered. To this I pledge myself; provided that this affair have not already transpired, that you now give me the letter from

him carried by the bird, that you engage upon your honour, for him and your daughter as well as for yourself, that you will embark immediately on board a ship that I shall provide to carry you to England, and that what has occurred shall never be disclosed."

Mr. Bolton paused for a while. He was aware of the extreme difficulty that would attend any adverse or publick proceeding against the Count, and he therefore was tempted to comply with the proposal made to him. "I make the engagement you require," replied he after some deliberation; "my daughter and I only are acquainted with your crime. I pledge my honour for the performance of the conditions you prescribe, and I bind myself for Theodore's acquiescence. But he must be liberated before to-morrow night."—

"He

"He shall," said the other. Miss Bolton, to hide her agitation, had turned her back to them during this conversation.

The mode of his release was next to be considered. In this Mr. Bolton showed his usual good sense, for he insisted that the Count should not quit him till the moment of embarkation, and in the mean time, he despatched a messenger for three or four English seamen from a vessel, then lying in the road, the captain of which he knew. The Count consented that one of these sailors should descend to the cavern, along with him, to assist in restoring the prisoner to liberty; and in return for this it was agreed, on the part of Mr. Bolton, that a female then in the cavern with Theodore, should accompany them to England.

The Count in this proceeding was influenced principally by the dread of a

publick accusation, which would expose him to Gaspar's insolence and indiscretion, and which might eventually develop the attempted assassination of Theodore in Bourdeaux, and several other crimes that had till then baffled all inquiry. The means employed to communicate the information to Mr. Bolton from the cavern, were such as no human prudence could have prevented, and the sudden departure of the English visitors from the *chateau* put it out of the villain's power to employ any other mode of proceeding than that which he had adopted; but he already determined to remove from the number of the living all those from whom he had now to apprehend danger or disgrace. These were Mr. Bolton, Julia, Theodore, Marie, and the two miscreants who carried Theodore to the grave.

But

But the compact that I have just mentioned could not be evaded; the English sailors were obtained, the property of Mr. Bolton and his daughter was removed from the *chateau*, and the cavern was visited. Theodore had not perished. Though he had been buried for a moment under a mass of earth, where he had suffered the horrours of a violent and most shocking death, he had, by a sudden and powerful exertion, succeeded, though nearly suffocated, in freeing himself from the enormous burden, and he had afterwards regained the outer recess. He and Marie were liberated, and they with Julia and her father embarked for England.

CHAP. III.

Nought is there under Heav'n's wide hollownesse
That moves more deare compassion of mind,
Then beautie brought t'unworthie wretchednesse,
Through envie's snares, or fortune's freakes unkind.
I, whether lately through her brightnes blynd,
Or through alleageance and fast fealty,
Which I do owe unto all womankynd,
Feele my hart prest with so great agony
When such I see, that all for pity I could dy.

. . . . . .

————Mia speranza!
Ah sie pur tu? Pur ti riveggo? Oh Dio!
Di gioia io moro; ed il mio petto appena
Può alternare i respiri. Oh caro! Oh tanto
E sospirato, e pianto,
E richiamato in vano!

THEODORE's delight at gaining his liberty and meeting Julia was unspeakable. She who had lately found herself attached to him by a new tie, that of their common danger, fondly yielded to her now resistless passion, and when together, few were the moments that there did not pass between

tween them some sweet though silent mark of mutual attachment, or some eloquent token of corresponding sentiment. Mr. Bolton's satisfaction at the prospect of his return to England, and at the recovery of his daughter, was unmixed with any uneasiness. It even communicated to his manners a portion of gaiety.

Marie, whose guilty fears were perpetually awake, and whose jealousy of Miss Bolton amounted to aversion, not only never left the small cabin that was allotted to her, but refused the visits of Theodore, who felt himself bound by humanity as well as politeness to offer her every attention in his power. The vessel in which they had embarked was clean and commodious, they had a fair wind, and they proceeded pleasantly on their voyage.

It is not my wish to dwell on minute or unimportant facts. If I ever err in this respect, I err unintentionally, and I would now land my personages in England, without further delay, impatient as I am to enter on the principal event of my history, but for an incident that occurred aboard their ship, not less terrible than it was singular.

In the same vessel was a passenger, an elderly man, who was unknown to every one aboard. His habits were reserved if not suspicious. He seemed to shun all observation, and he never appeared on deck except at night, and then muffled in a cloak. Theodore, whose love of contemplation and study kept him out of bed later than Mr. Bolton and Julia, had sometimes seen him, and had once by accident, without officiousness or inquisitive obtrusion,

sion, entered into conversation with him. He spoke like a man of observation, and seemed perfectly acquainted with nautical affairs; but he was not polished, and he neither sought to please, nor did it appear that it was in his power to be agreeable.

They were within two days sail of England. Theodore and the stranger happened to meet for the second time and to converse. They were standing at the side of the vessel looking towards the stars. It was midnight. A smart breeze from the South-west had agitated the sea considerably. The noise of the cordage, the luminous appearance of the water, and the strong smell of the tar, accorded well with their conversation. It was on the subject of navigation. Theodore was listening attentively to the other, who had just pointed his attention to the constellation of the *Greater Bear*, when,

when, by a sudden and vigorous action, he was pushed by his perfidious instructor into the deep. A loud cry escaped him as he fell. The alarm was given, the vessel was put about, ropes, coops and lanterns were hoven overboard. All was bustle and exertion among the few seamen who were on deck, and no one was more active than the murderer. But he had taken care that their endeavours should be useless, for as Theodore was falling, he had hooked a leaden weight to his coat, to prevent him from rising to the surface of the water. For two hours they stopped the vessel's course as much as was in their power, and employed such means as experience could teach to save or find him, but all in vain. The account given by the assassin was that Mr. Dalbert had seated himself on the gunwale, and had in conse-

quence of the tossing of the vessel, suddenly fallen over, and the villain pretended to be so exhausted by his exertions, and so shocked by what had happened, as to be unable to remain any longer out of bed.

In the morning what was the grief, what was the horrour of Mr. Bolton and of Julia, when they were told of the dreadful accident? She heard the doleful tale and was struck with speechless misery. The coldness of death froze every avenue of her heart. She sunk into her father's arms, dumb as despair, motionless as a monument. The wretch who had perpetrated the crime affected illness, and never rose till their arrival in England, and then he contrived to land without being suspected, and without being seen by the other passengers.

Mr. Bolton having procured lodgings for

for Marie de Solase, and promised her his advice and assistance, whenever these should be necessary, returned to his house in Berkshire with Julia. The day after their arrival they were joined by *Mademoiselle de Sagoné,* who having visited England in consequence of a fortune bequeathed to her there by an uncle, came to reside at Bolton-hall till she should receive the amount of it.

Time, the softener of sorrow, abated in some months the violence of Julia's grief, but *Mademoiselle de Sagoné* became extremely ill. A malady that had for some time affected her, gained strength daily. It was one that gave her not more pain than apprehension. It baffled the skill of the most eminent physicians, and in its symptoms was as extraordinary as its cause was unaccountable. The horrid night she had

had passed in the *chateau* was ever present to her recollection, and with it she combined, by an instinctive association, her present illness, for Miss Bolton had told her all she suspected of Count Egfryd.

"My God!" she would say to Julia in agony and terrour, "is it possible that I have been the victim of his profligacy? Have I, whose conscience is clear and immaculate, received a stain from audacious depravity? Is the blot of infamy to blacken my reputation and my name? and am I to afford a proof that female honour may be endangered, without any violation of innocence, and even without a consciousness of the forfeiture? Am I, alone, of all the daughters of Eve, to deplore a misfortune without precedent and without name? am I, alone, without being vitious, to suffer the vilest penalty of vice?

vice? Good Heavens! Do I bear, even now; the unhallowed and horrible triumph of the abominable Egfryd? Happy thou, whom Providence, by a manifest interposition, rescued from his snares!"

Sometimes nearly choked by her sobs, and shedding floods of tears, the unhappy girl would suffer paroxysms of frantick distraction. At other times, stupid with woe and horrour, she would spend hours and days in profound solitude. She felt all the punishment of shame without being sensible of a fault, and of guilt without being criminal. A fixed and cruel melancholy preyed upon her spirits. The thought of her unparalleled misfortune absorbed all other reflections, and she looked the living image of inconsolable affliction.

The attempts of the gentle and friendly Julia to soothe her were utterly unavailing.

The

The agitation and dejection of her mind had a powerful and shocking effect on her constitution. A general relaxation enfeebled every muscle, and debilitated every fibre; each faculty was disordered, and each function of her frame felt the derangement of excessive and complicated disease. Her nerves became irritable to a degree that was truly piteous. The entire physical economy was vitiated and distempered, and a total and mortal revolution of the animal machine was hourly expected. But poor *Mademoiselle de Sagoné,* by the violence of her sufferings, escaped an evil that she dreaded more than death, and, satisfied of her escape from the most terrible calamity that an honourable female could experience, she bore the crisis which determined her good fortune with heroism, and in a short time she was out of danger. By slow degrees

grees she recovered a portion of her strength, and at length was convalescent. In a few months she returned to the Continent, where she entered into a convent, in which she spent the remainder of her days.

To return to Theodore. The hook, attached to him by the assassin, had, in consequence of the weight suspended to it, torn through his coat, and been detached from it before he reached the water. As the vessel was under considerable way when he fell, he had not been able to make himself heard on board; but, fortunately catching at a coop that had been thrown out, he kept himself afloat. He remained in the water till the sun arose. He was almost dead with cold, but he still hung to the coop. He looked around, and at a distance, to windward, he descried a large vessel,

vessel. The joyful sight gave him strength, gave him courage, gave him hope. His numbness, his fatigue, were forgotten, and in his anxiety to be seen by those on board, every impression of pain was lost. Unable to direct the motion of the buoyant instrument of his preservation, he was the sport of every wave, and with the means of preservation in his view, he found it impossible to approach them.

Sometimes he would imagine that in the irregular and disturbed rolling of the billowy surface, he was carried with horrible rapidity from the ship and towards death. At other times, hope equally illusive with fear, would persuade him that he was drifting toward the vessel. It was not long till this in full sail bore down. She went directly before the wind, which, happily for Theodore, blew her close to his coop.

He

He was now to be seen or to perish. He waved his wet handkerchief about his head and roared for help. He was seen and heard and taken up, but no sooner was he on the deck than he fell into a swoon. The Captain humanely ordered him to be put into a warm bed, and continued to treat him with all possible attention till he was perfectly recovered.

Captain Jenkins was a kind-hearted, blunt, British tar. He sailed in his own vessel, the *Isabel*, and was now bound for St. Petersburgh. Theodore told him ingenuously all his story, concealing only such parts of it, as, under Mr. Bolton's promise of secrecy to the Count D'Egfryd, were not to be disclosed, "Well, well," said Jenkins, "never mind till we return to England, and if I don't find out that murdering rascal that hove you overboard,

say

say I'm no seaman, that's all. I'll see him tucked up on a lofty gallows yet, or I'll be d——d else." The character of the Captain was new to Theodore—it amused and pleased him, while his, in return, gained the respect and regard of the honest tar. Each liked the other, and before they arrived in Russia, a friendship was formed between them which continued during their lives. Unknown to either of them was that artificial and unworthy principle, which forbids a man of the world to seek or to retain a friend. The restraint, that such a connexion is said to impose, is irksome; the confidence it demands, is dangerous; the obligations it confers, are painful —only to the licentious, the dissolute, and the depraved. They remained in Russia about six weeks, and then they embarked together in the Isabel for England.

It

It may be imagined but cannot be described what astonishment, what rapture, Theodore's presence excited at Bolton-hall. With him came happiness, content and hope, while his escape, or rather his resurrection, was piously attributed to the supernatural and benign interference of protecting Heaven. The terms on which he had consented to come to England, were that he was to receive two hundred pounds *per annum*, for which he was to act as secretary to Mr. Bolton, and as preceptor to his daughter. He now entered on the duties of his new situation, and made an arrangement to send his mother in Bourdeaux one hundred pounds a-year. His wants were few and simple, and the remainder of his salary was quite sufficient to satisfy them. By his instructions Miss Bolton soon acquired such a knowledge of French as is seldom

dom attained in England; she might, with truth, be said to speak and write with purity and elegance. Her advancement in Italian was likewise considerable. Love is as quick in learning as it is patient in teaching. But words were not her only study. Guided by his refined and classick taste, and improved by her sedulous imitation of his eloquent and copious style, her language acquired propriety, fluency and force, and her powers of literary composition became excellent and admirable.

In this state of things was the family at Bolton-hall, when Mr. Alcot, a neighbouring gentleman of large possessions and of ancient family, presented himself as a suitor to Julia. He was young, sensible and prudent, but reserved, sullen and malignant. He was not handsome and he was not amiable. His figure was clumsy and

ill-proportioned. His face was harsh and irregular, and his manners were coarse and unfashioned. He was treated with politeness and respect by Miss Bolton and her father, but he found that all his assiduities had no effect in gaining her affections. He did not want for penetration, but he was not sensible of his own deficiences. He therefore looked for the cause of her indifference and coldness beyond himself. Theodore was too prominent and too alarming an object to be overlooked. Jealousy, sharpened by pride, rage and self-love, viewed with microscopick minuteness, and measured with more than hydrostatic exactness, every action, every look, and every word, that passed between the lovers. No doubt remains. Their mutual attachment appears from proofs crowded on proofs, by demonstration pressing on demonstration.

Scepticism

Scepticism itself must shrink before the overpowering evidence collected by his industry and treasured in his memory. But this attachment, in his malignant eye, takes the appearance, the shape, the hue, of a clandestine and criminal connexion. Mr. Alcot was too artful and too reserved to let his suspicion or his hatred appear. He endeavoured to conceal both, and by degrees he removed himself from the society at Bolton-hall, without betraying either.

It was now summer, and Mr. Bolton prepared for the experiment on the kindness and liberality of General Dalbert, that he had projected when he became acquainted with Theodore. He would have gone to him before, but that the old gentleman had been confined with a severe fit of the gout. Being now, however, nearly

well, further delay was not only unnecessary, but it might be dangerous.

Mr. Bolton was not unacquainted with the mutual sentiments of his daughter and her preceptor, nor was he displeased with them; but it was only an act of prudence and decorum, he thought, to wait on the General before the marriage ceremony took place, which, he was determined, should, at all events, be performed. He wished much to have it in his power to surprise the young people with the agreeable intelligence of a successful visit to the old gentleman, and therefore spoke of his journey to Holtham, where he lived, as a circumstance not likely to happen for another month.

True love, allied to content, demands little besides the presence of the beloved object.

object. This delay, therefore, was a matter of trifling moment in the estimation of his daughter and of Theodore. They were happy in each others society, and seldom thought of futurity. A proud and honourable sentiment on his part, and on hers the amiable and timid modesty of her sex, her age and her character, prevented them from bestowing a thought on matrimony; and when the idea of Julia, wedded to another more rich and more respectable than himself, would obtrude upon his mind, it was treated as an unwelcome visitor, and banished with all possible expedition. At some moments he thought and believed that Mr. Bolton wished to see him married to his daughter, but such an opinion he would not encourage, dreading that it was merely the illusive errour of hope and love.

There were moments of gloom and solitude, when Theodore, who was by nature thoughtful, would brood over his prospects in silent mournfulness. He would say to himself, I have attained my twenty-fifth year. Ere long my hair will change from healthful and glossy black, to dull and sober grey; my teeth, now so white and sound, will betray marks of decline, and my skin will be roughened by innumerable wrinkles. The early sportiveness of my disposition will no longer brighten my features; gravity and care will appear in my countenance and my gait; all, all will remind me of mortality. The springiness, spirit, and vivacity of youth, will be succeeded by heaviness, inactivity, and relaxation. The warmth and sensibility of my nature will feel the exhaustion of use and time. Cold, decayed, feeble,

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it will be my miserable fate to perceive and measure the awful and slow, but inevitable approaches of death, without the endearing alleviation of a wife, or the consoling reflection of leaving behind me any legitimate offspring. Ah! who is there to smooth a pillow for my age? I shall die and be forgotten, no virtuous partner of connubial tenderness to bedew my grave with a tear, no son to retain my name, no daughter to bear my image into another family, and to talk of me to another generation: The comfortless and despised state of bachelorship awaits me; and when I die what shall I leave behind? Oh! wretched, wretched state! what avails it to me to know that marriages are too frequent and should be discouraged, that there are too many people in the world for their happiness or their support, and that wedlock

always increases the cares of life? Alas! what has abstract reasoning to do with matters of the heart, with sentiment, with feeling? I must remain a solitary creature, miserable in an independence that selfishness only could desire, and cursed with privileges that libertinism only could hold important! Having no connexion of the soul with any female, and no reciprocalness of wants, duties, or affections; living solely for myself, and shut out for ever from the communion of virtuous love, from the pure, the holy, the mysterious delights of marriage, I shall be attached to society by no tie; I shall be isolated in nature; I shall be separated from mankind by the contemned and worthless individuality of my forlorn situation! When age shall wither my frame, and load me with infirmities, I shall think with

with bitterness of the amusement, sweet to an old man, that prattling grand-children would afford; and with agony shall say to myself, "how much beauty, how much vigour, how much gallantry, how much affection, might have surrounded, and adorned, and supported, and cherished my existence, had I married! But now I look among all the inhabitants of this extensive world, and not a living creature owes to me its being, or can call me father!" Too late shall I then repent, in the anguish of my heart, that my pride, my indolence, or my weakness, should have tempted me to disobey the first dictate of our nature. Pride, indolence, or weakness, let it be. Come, contempt, misery, solitude, and despair, shower on my devoted head all your accumulated evils! but never, never shall woman receive my vows of fidelity

and love. She whom I prefer to all others I will love till death, but her I must not wed. Of illicit connexions and an illegitimate offspring I shall never be accused. My prior attachment, my delicacy, and my morality, will ever preserve me from the former, and from the latter my humanity. Never shall child of mine be ashamed to call me father. Never shall the reproach of bastardy receive from my indiscretion its sting or its application.

To remain any longer at Mr. Bolton's, and trifle with Julia's affections, was what neither honour nor propriety could sanction. But he could not leave it without declaring that such was his intention. This he had done. From her father the declaration had drawn a serious rebuke, accompanied with a positive injunction not to quit him, and a promise of something undefined,

defined, but important to the last degree, provided he remained. As for Julia it had made her so miserable and had so alarming an effect on her health, that Theodore literally had not courage nor power to repeat the attempt. He was therefore, in a manner, compelled to stay.

The better to conceal his visit to General Dalbert, Mr. Bolton insinuated that there were some affairs of consequence which required his immediate attendance in London. His family, accordingly, entertained no doubt that he was going to town. They were now in England about a year, and, since Theodore's arrival, Mr. Bolton had employed all possible means to discover the name or the retreat of the assassin who had thrown him into the water, but hitherto without effect. That wretch had, as the reader must have suspected, been

sent by the Count on the murderous commission. He had been paid a large sum on leaving France by Gaspar Pontgebre, and he had been promised that the remainder of his vile wages should be given to him by the same agent, as soon as an authentick account of Theodore's death should reach Bourdeaux. Neither of them knew for whom he acted, and, while their employer continued to pay them liberally, neither of them felt any anxiety to know. Of Gaspar I have spoken before. The other was a native of England, and a miscreant covered with innumerable crimes. But more of him hereafter.

Marie De Solase being totally neglected by the Count, tired of solitude, utterly ignorant of the language of the country in which she was, and entirely dependant on the charity of Mr. Bolton, conceived an unconquerable

unconquerable disgust and hatred to England, and was seized, notwithstanding the dangers which awaited her in France, with the *maladie du pays,* that mental complaint which urges the patient with irresistible force towards home. How often does Providence, by an Almighty hand, impel the murderer to quit the concealment of craft and terrour, and to advance even beneath the sword of justice! She was, moreover, stimulated to return by her resentment to the Count, whose desertion of her had roused in her breast all the implacability and wickedness of her character.

Having procured from Mr. Bolton one hundred pounds sterling, she equipped herself in male attire and embarked for France. She obtained artificial whiskers, spectacles of green glass and a large wig, and used every

every other precaution that fear or cunning could suggest to disguise her person. Skilled in the composition of poisons, and experienced in the application of them, she purchased some Tokay wine, and added to it a mixture of the most deadly power, but free from taste, smell or colour, it being nearly the same as the horrible preparation called *aqua tofana*.

Having filled two small bottles with the deleterious liquor, she packed them in a case and sent them to Bourdeaux, accompanied with a note to the Count Egfryd, purporting to be written from Paris by the Baron Bikwaros, stating that the two bottles, one green and the other white, contained different wines, and that on the Count's opinion of the flavour of each depended a large wager. The infamous Marie had fabricated the note, and such was the unfeeling atrocity

atrocity of her disposition, that she was utterly regardless, provided she poisoned him, how many beside might taste the mixture and die. To make her vengeance complete, she wrote to him, on the day after its departure, a letter, in her own undisguised hand-writing, of which the following is a translation.

To Count Egfryd.

"Ere this arrives my revenge shall have overtaken thee. Ere this reaches thee, the springs of thy life shall have been poisoned, and by me. Ungrateful, perfidious man, couldst thou think that I was to be neglected and despised with impunity? Proud, depraved and puerile character, wert thou to take advan-

tage of my misfortunes, and to compel me under the fear of famine to submit to thy detestable arrangements? Wert thou to extort my compliances under the dread of hunger? Wert thou in the horrible slavery, to which thou hadst doomed me, to triumph over my misery and to outrage all my feelings? Wert thou afterwards to desert me in a foreign country, a prey to poverty and spleen? and couldst thou hope to escape the terrours of my vengeance? In vain thou seekest the aid of physick. Thou art beyond the reach of mortal help. Thou shalt die, and that speedily, and in torture. Where is now thy boasted art? How wilt thou preserve thy reputation from the infamy I shall stamp it with? Where is thy precaution, on which thy vanity taught thee to depend against every accident? Where is thy cou-

rage,

rage, or what avails it? Writhing in agony, thou diest by a woman's hand. Covered with reprobation thou sinkest in the flower of thy age, and in thy last moments let thy favourite doctrine of materialism, and thy contempt of futurity, yield thee all the happiness, and hope, and consolation, that thou deservest. But then, even then, surely thou wilt not forget

"MARIE DE SOLASE."

This letter she knew would reach him before his death, for the poison was of such slow operation, as not to kill for forty hours after it was taken. It happened that Marie, on the day after her despatching the letter, was recognized and apprehended; she was transmitted to Bourdeaux, identified as the convicted murderess of her husband the advocate De Solase, and executed according

according to her sentence, impenitent and unpitied.

Mr. Bolton having fixed a day for his departure to London, every necessary preparation was made for his journey, and about nine o'clock in the evening, he left Bolton-hall accompanied by Theodore, with an intention to walk to Newbury, through which a stage-coach passed to London. A *valise*, containing a few necessaries, he had sent by a servant to the hotel the day before.

Here might I pause! When the Persian courier, travelling on foot from Betzurvan to Kehemend, arrives at Kasimadab, he stops for awhile and casts his eye upon the mountains he has traversed, thinks of the precipices he has passed, and looks forward, dejectedly, to the dreary and tedious journey that he has still to run. When the

the industrious Indian, in want of a vessel to navigate the ocean, whether to ensnare its finny inhabitants, or to attack the savages of some neighbouring island, fells the largest tree of the forest, and proceeds to convert with patient industry its trunk into a boat; he cuts, and scrapes, and scoops, until the external shape of his canoe becomes apparent; he has already employed months upon his work, and still it is to be hollowed, and his only tool is a hatchet of stone. He reflects on what he has done, and what he has still to perform. He utters a sigh of apathy, resignation or despair, and with sunken head renews his labours. When the chymical professor, intent on the establishment of a new theory, or prompted by the glory of tearing down an ancient system, commences a course of experiments, each of which must be pursued

sued with care and with minuteness; every step he takes is noted, every observation written down; but unthought-of facts occur, unexpected phenomena present themselves, and in the midst of crucibles, furnaces and retorts, tired, oppressed and stupified, his success uncertain, and more than half his labours unaccomplished, he throws himself on a bench in his dusky laboratory, and with folded arms laments that the love of science or the fire of ambition should have ever urged him to the arduous enterprize.

Here might I pause! I have already passed over many leagues of land and water, my personages have suffered sundry misfortunes. Scenes of horrour and events of mystery have employed me. I have travelled through France, and I have brought my hero and my heroine back to England,

England, but the most difficult part of my performance is not yet begun. My hero and heroine, do I say? Ah! let me not be misunderstood. They are not creatures of fiction. The incidents I relate are not imaginary. Too old and perhaps too dull for invention, I narrate nothing but what may be proved. With facility, with fluency, I have described a *chateau* and a cavern; the sufferings of virtue, and the stratagems of vice; but how many pages are still to be written? What heart-rending scenes remain still to be related? Oh! great is the labour yet before me. I have to record a true history, which equals if it doth not exceed all that the fertility of invention has ever produced, whether to rouse attention, to touch the feelings, or to surprise the fancy. I have to divest it of all that might seem incredible, and to make it appear as probable on perusal,

as

as it is authentick in reality. What I have performed has been easy, it is but as a preface to the subject which first engaged me to write. That horrible and mysterious subject is now to be disclosed.

Here might I pause! but the uncertain tenure by which I hold existence forbids repose. Therefore have I hurried through the last chapter, and dismissed with such rapidity the Count and his agents, Mr. Alcot and Marie; and therefore have I fled with precipitation from St. Uldrich and the grave. I have already written more than my infirmities could well permit, but what remains to be described (alas! is such a description for my years?) fills me with dismay, and much, very much I fear that I shall never live to accomplish the arduous undertaking. But while I have strength let me proceed.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Who finds the heifer dead and bleeding fresh,
And sees fast by a butcher with an ax,
But will suspect 'twas he that made the slaughter?
Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest,
But may imagine how the bird was dead,
Altho' the kite soar with unbloody beak?
Ev'n so suspicious is this tragedy.

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————Foul deeds will rise
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them to man's eyes;
And murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ.

Miss Bolton and Theodore were sitting together at dinner, the day after her father's departure, when a servant, whose countenance and manner denoted excessive agitation, entered the room. "What is the matter, William?" said she.—"Oh! Miss, there be such a stir below stairs. There be all the sheriff's officers, and the coroner himself, about my master, they say,

say, that's killed by his honour, Mr. Dalbert."—"Your master! is it my father killed?" cried she, trembling and growing pale.—"I beg pardon, my Lady. I'm sure I'd never think for to say whatsumever might flurry your Ladyship, but here is Mr. Alcot's steward, Mr. Derrill himself, who knows it all."—"How is this, Sir? pray can you explain the meaning of this liberty and this noise?" asked Miss Bolton.—"The meaning, Madam, is shortly this, your father is shot by that *munseer* at your side, and my master has sent us with this warrant to take him."—"My father shot!" shrieked she.—"Yes, shot and dead. He now lies at my master's, waiting for the coroner's inquest." Julia replied not. Such a shock was more than her frame could support. She sunk lifeless into the arms of Theodore.—"Villain!" cried

cried he, in a voice of thunder, and his eyes flashing fire, "what have you done? See what your cruelty and folly have produced! Leave the room, fellow, instantly, and wait for me below." There was something in his manner as he said this that commanded obedience. Mr. Derrill muttered and retired.

Julia in a short time revived, and resting her arm, unconscious of what she did, upon Theodore's shoulder, tried in vain to give utterance to her words.—"Be composed, my Julia, my friend, my love," said he, little less agitated than herself.—"Your father and I were stopped last night by a robber, who held a pistol in his hand, which, as I attempted to wrest it from him, went off, and killed him on the spot. It was an unpleasant accident, I confess, but it troubles me little. I should have men-

tioned it to you before, but I feared to alarm you. Your father seemed to know the person of the deceased, and was so shocked at the recognition, and so wretched at the thought of the circumstance becoming publick, for what reason I can't conceive, that, to pacify him, I promised to inter the corpse in a retired spot, where no one should find it. In some measure quieted by my promise, he went on to Newbury, and I returned for a spade, with which I buried the body before morning. This they have discovered by some means, and hence the blundering impertinence of that fellow. But I will go and explain all the circumstances to the coroner, and will return to you before supper." He then left her, and proceeded with the officers of justice to Alcot-abbey.

His manner was firm and unconcerned, and

and though treated as a murderer by those who accompanied and guarded him, he entered the room where the coroner's jury was assembled, with composure and with dignity. Mr. Alcot, as a justice of the peace, assumed the privilege of making a speech. It was tedious, virulent, and formal. He commenced with a panegyrick on Mr. Bolton, "whose murder," he said, "was the melancholy occasion of bringing them together. He then stated with minuteness the manner in which the body had been discovered buried in the ground, and asserted, as the truth was, that Theodore was the last person seen in company with Mr. Bolton the preceding evening; that, moreover, the prisoner had been heard to cough during the night in a hut into which he had entered by

stealth, and in which the garden implements at Bolton-hall were kept, and that a spade placed among them had been found marked with blood, though it had been put by the night before with no such stain. That this was the spade employed to bury the murdered man, no doubt, he said, could be entertained; and thus by a short and simple chain of circumstances, the prisoner must, he contended, be judged guilty of murder. But to banish as he said the possibility of doubt from the minds of his hearers, "here," continued he, "is a bundle which arrived but a few minutes before the prisoner, containing the clothes worn by him yesterday, which were found locked up carefully in a secret drawer in his bed-chamber, and spotted thus with blood, and with them was this pistol, that

that has all the appearance of being recently discharged, and with which I am sure the unnatural deed was perpetrated."

Mr. Alcot in his speech omitted nothing that might induce a belief of Theodore's guilt, and having concluded it, he produced one of the gardeners from Bolton-hall, who, upon oath, confirmed his statement. This was the man who, lying on a loft in the hut, had heard the prisoner cough as he searched among the garden implements, who in the morning had found the spade marked with blood, and who had afterwards discovered the dead body. Mr. Bolton's butler, James Taylor, was then examined. He swore that the deceased had left home at nine the preceding night, intending to walk to Newbury, accompanied by the prisoner; and the witness further deposed that he was present when the pri-

soner's clothes were found, spotted with blood, in a drawer in his apartment; that the pistol was locked up with them, and that these were the clothes Mr. Dalbert had worn the day before.

The evidence being closed amid much bustle and confusion, the coroner desired to hear what the prisoner could advance in his exculpation. Theodore was about to speak, when, obtaining a view of the corpse, till then concealed from him by the crowd, what must have been his horrour on perceiving, not the body of an unknown ruffian, but the dead and mangled remains of his friend and benefactor Mr. Bolton? His senses failed, his blood grew cold, its circulation, as it were, ceased, his limbs shook, and he sunk inanimate upon the floor. When he returned to life, he seized one of the cold hands of the corpse, and

and kissing it with much emotion, burst into tears. He would have repeated, perhaps, what he had before said to Miss Bolton, but the shock he had received left him apparently only the power to declare, in weak and faltering accents, his innocence, and his total ignorance of the manner of Mr. Bolton's death. But this appearing to the jury, as it reasonably might, a mere evasion, they found a verdict of wilful murder against him.

The convicted wretch, execrated by all who attended the trial or heard of it, was with difficulty saved from the fury of the populace, and he was that night committed to Abingdon gaol. The assizes were to commence immediately, and a day for his trial was appointed. The news of Mr. Bolton's melancholy fate spread imme-

diately throughout the kingdom, and excited universal horrour.

Miss Bolton passed some hours (after Theodore's departure from her with Derril) in great uneasiness. There was something in the nature of the frightful intelligence she had received that must have disturbed the most unfeeling, but to her it was truly terrible. Her impatience and anxiety every moment increased, when at ten o'clock Mr. Alcot was announced to her. When he entered the room, she could only point to a chair for him.—"Miss Bolton," said he, heedless of her agitation, "I have a very shocking business to communicate to you. Would that some one else had apprized you of it!"—"My father"—"Your father, Madam, is no more."—"No more! my father no more! Ah!

is

is my father dead? Where, where is he? Let me fly to him immediately!"—"He is at my house, but really you cannot, must not see him."—"Not see my father, and he dead! Nothing, nothing, shall prevent me."—"You are yet to learn, perhaps, Miss Bolton, that he has fallen under the hands of an assassin; my good and worthy friend has been murdered."—"Murdered! and by whom? say, who could have the heart to murder my father?"—"Theodore Dalbert."—"'Tis false! Theodore Dalbert is incapable, utterly incapable of such a crime. His nature is too mild, too noble, to harbour even a thought of such guilt. But let me fly to see my father, if I cannot save him." Saying which she hurried down stairs, ordered her chariot to follow her, and ran towards Alcot-abbey. She was soon overtaken by her servants and the

carriage, and having entered it, she desired them to drive with all possible speed to her father. They already knew by report where he was to be found. Ellen, the faithful Ellen, accompanied her. Arrived at the house, she flew to the room where the corpse lay. "Ah! my father, my loved, my dear, my honoured father, friend, parent! Is it thus, I see you? Oh! piteous, lamentable, shocking sight! Let me once again embrace you! Your Julia, your child, your darling, once again will kiss you, and never, never, shall they tear me from you more! Here will I grow, here will I die!" In a paroxysm of grief the unhappy girl threw herself on the body, glewed herself to its shattered head, sobbed with convulsive agony, and dropped back motionless.

Removed to a chamber, undressed, and placed

placed in bed, she was, with the assistance of Ellen and another woman, after some time restored to life. When sufficiently recovered to be able to speak, she begged to be permitted to see her father once again, but this was positively and peremptorily refused by her attendants. She then requested to see Mr. Alcot, to whom she made many apologies for the abruptness of her behaviour. Her apologies were not the result nor an act of ceremony. Even in the anguish of her heart she could think with uneasiness of the vehemence of her language to him. Her gentle mind could not bear the reflection of having given offence. "Mr. Alcot," said she, "can you forgive me? I have been guilty of rudeness, ingratitude and unkindness to you. My unparalleled wretchedness must be my excuse. To your

generosity I sue for pardon." It was impossible even for Mr. Alcot, to retain displeasure against Julia. He entreated her to be assured that he had banished from his recollection the expressions to which she alluded, and that in his pity for her and his admiration, every other sentiment was lost. She desired to know the particulars of her father's melancholy fate, but a physician, who had been sent for arriving at this juncture, prohibited any conversation, and desired that Miss Bolton should take a composing draught and be left alone till morning. The next day she repeated her request for permission to see the corpse, but her physician expressly forbade the attempt, and in a few hours afterwards it was buried. She insisted, however, though still extremely unwell, upon hearing the whole account of the murder, and was lost in utter

utter astonishment at the relation that was given her. She could not believe that Theodore was guilty, and yet the circumstances were strong to criminate him.

Mr. Alcot, with whom she conversed on the subject, in vain argued against him, in vain contended that the bloody clothes and the pistol found in his room, and his admitting to her that he had killed an individual, and buried him with a spade (found at Bolton-hall) in a retired spot, were such a confirmation of the gardener's testimony as must satisfy the most scrupulous and sceptical of his guilt. She, nevertheless, had no more doubt of his innocence than of her own being, and not knowing what to advance in his vindication, from thenceforth preserved a mournful silence, and sunk into a profound melancholy. The next day she called for pen, ink,

ink, and paper, and wrote the following letter, which she committed to the care of Ellen.

To Theodore Dalbert, Esq. &c. &c.

"FROM my bed I write to you. Were I not confined by illness, I would visit you. You are now my first, perhaps my only friend. You are innocent I am sure. You are unfortunate I know. You must be my debtor for fifty pounds that I enclose. At this moment I can command no more. You will want money, and you may draw on me for what you will require. You have enemies who wish to ruin you. You must therefore lay aside that mistaken pride which would prompt you to silent contempt and scornful inac-

inaction. At this moment of sorrow and distress, shall I be excused for harbouring any sentiment but that of affliction, of using any language but that of lamentation? But if I loved my father, should I not be interested for him whom he loved? Your life and character are at stake. Preserve them and I may be, once again, happy. Forfeit them and I expire.

"JULIA BOLTON."

On the morning of the trial the court was crowded at an early hour, and Theodore, who refused all professional aid, having been arraigned, the indictment read, to which he was directed to plead not guilty, and the jury sworn, counsel for the crown arose and addressed the court this.

"Gentlemen

"Gentlemen of the jury, you are this day called upon to acquit the most injured of mankind, or to convict the most atrocious of criminals. The prisoner at the bar is to receive from you life and honour, or death and infamy. How important, therefore, is your duty! Would to Heaven I could hope, for the character of my species, for the dignity of human nature, that your sentence would restore him to the esteem and affection of the virtuous! But if I am informed rightly, who among the bad is half so vitious? If I am informed rightly! Ah! too faithfully, too truly have I been instructed! A series of proofs as simple as they are convincing, as certain as they are probable, the evident interposition of Almighty Providence, and the confession of the culprit himself, all, all, authorise and urge me to hold him forth

to

to your view and to the publick execration, as a monster of unexampled perfidy, of unparalleled ingratitude, of matchless cruelty, as a felon of the blackest stamp, as a murderer, and, I might add, a parricide.

"It is my duty to state the circumstances of the case, or my respect for your feelings, and the pain that I shall myself suffer at the recital, should impose eternal silence on so horrible a subject. For two and twenty years have I had the honour of attending this court, and of practising at the bar. For this period of time and some years longer have I studied the laws of my country, and the history of its criminal jurisprudence. But neither has chance brought within my observation, nor has reading furnished from past experience, a case at once so clear and so barbarous; a delinquent so specious and so dangerous,

as

as this case and this delinquent. The needy villain who shoots the object of his cupidity, who happens to oppose him in committing an act of robbery; the sanguinary assassin, who, prompted by revenge, penury, or jealousy, deprives of life his fellow creature, can offer in their behalf some plea, some excuse. Passion blinded, anger provoked, or despair urged, or the object of their violence was unknown, or had never conferred a benefit. But here is a wretch to whom subtlety itself, or sophistry, or eloquence, or ingenuity, cannot afford the slightest semblance of extenuation.

"Released from a state of the most abject poverty in France by the good, the worthy man, whose loss we all deplore; brought over by him to this country upon terms of unexampled liberality; introduced

duced to his friends and relatives as an equal and a friend; treated in all respects as his child: What return does he make? Admitted into the garden of innocence and happiness, this viper, this foreign miscreant, this second Satan, with a flagitiousness and atrocity happily unknown to our favoured island, plots the destruction of his benefactor, and contrives by some false pretences not well known to us at present, to seduce him to undertake a journey to London. On Friday the 27th of last month, they left Bolton-hall, about nine at night. It will appear in evidence that the prisoner at the bar undertook to see the deceased safe from his own house to the town of Newbury, through which a stage-coach passed that was to carry Mr. Bolton to town. Mr. Bolton had, before he left home, expressed an intention to sleep

sleep that night at the Mitre inn, where the stage-coach stopped, but it will be shown that he never reached this inn, which is the principal one in Newbury.

" Before I proceed to state to you, gentlemen of the jury, the substance of the evidence that will be adduced, I cannot help remarking for a moment on the wonderful wisdom and justice of Providence, that never suffers the crime of murder to escape undiscovered or unpunished. I may indeed with truth declare, that but for a miracle this nefarious offender would not have been discovered. Discovered, did I say? nay, would not have been suspected. How could suspicion rest on him? Could the hand which was loaded with benefits be supposed to wield the weapon that was to destroy its benefactor? Could a heart be found so depraved, a

head-

head so corruptly suspicious, as even to imagine that the creature of bounty, the object of beneficence, the beloved child of adoption, would be the treacherous assassin of his more than father? Every ennobling sentiment of our nature would spurn, in honour to humanity, so foul an imputation. To harbour it unjustly would betray a mind nearly as replete with atrocity as that which instigated the commission of the crime, and the very arraignment of the prisoner at the bar, amounts almost to a confirmation of his guilt. At what hour he returned to Bolton hall that night is not known, as he always kept in his pocket the key of a back door, which permitted him to enter when he pleased, but it is certain that he appeared at the breakfast-table, in the morning, with apparent unconcern; and this consummate hypocrisy

risy on his part, is, in my mind, no small aggravation of his crime.

"It will appear to you, gentlemen of the jury, that one Thomas Andrews, a gardener in the employment of Mr. Bolton, was accustomed to sleep upon a loft in an out-house near the garden, on the ground-floor of which he kept all the implements of his occupation. This man knew the prisoner at the bar, he had frequently attended him on botanical excursions, and had as frequently conversed with him. He knew his person; was acquainted with his voice, his foreign pronunciation of English, and with the sound of a cough that had never parted him since his arrival in this country. On the night of the day laid in the indictment, Thomas Andrews was asleep in his bed, when he was awakened by the noise of some one entering softly into

into the out-house where he lay, and (listening attentively) he heard the person who had entered cough (in such a manner as indicated a wish to suppress the noise of it), and search among the garden implements, which were in a particular corner. Andrews knew the cough to be the prisoner's and therefore he made no alarm. He and all the servants of Mr. Bolton had been taught to look upon the prisoner with the greatest respect, which, had his moral character been equal to his manners and his accomplishments, I confess would have been well deserved. Andrews from his respect to the prisoner, therefore, made no noise. He heard him depart in a few minutes, closing the door of the out-house after him, and just then the great clock at the stables struck eleven. Immediately upon this he fell asleep again and did not awake

awake till six the next morning, when he got up. The habits of such a person are simple and uniform. He was accustomed to visit the gardens at this hour, and it happened that this morning he required a spade to assist him in his work. He had but one. This he had placed the evening before, without any particular mark or stain upon it, among the other garden tools, but now he found it spotted with blood. Surprised at this he repaired to his work, but happening, in the course of the day, to pass through the shrubbery, he perceived the mark of blood upon the ground. The stains upon the spade instantly occurred to him, and influenced by suspicion, he followed the track of the blood till he arrived at a retired and unfrequented spot, which had the appearance of having been newly turned up. The

man.

man, at once curious and alarmed, as it was natural he should be under such circumstances, lost no time in raising the recently stirred earth, and in a little while he found, about a foot below the surface, the body of the deceased. Terrified and shocked he instantly ran towards the house, but within about two hundred yards of the fatal spot, he chanced to meet Mr. Alcot of Alcot-abbey. He returned with him, and that gentleman, whose activity as a magistrate, whose humanity as a man, every one is acquainted with, had the body immediately removed to his own house, and having heard the gardener's story, he sent some people to apprehend the prisoner and to search his apartment.

" It is happy for the peace of civil society that the wicked never possess foresight and cunning equal to their depravity. This

observation is forcibly exemplified in the case of the prisoner at the bar. He whom neither affection, gratitude, religion, nor compassion could influence, he, who was insensible to every social, every human affection, had not the sense, or had not the cunning, to destroy his clothes. Probably he thought that the body would never be found, and that he might, at his leisure, burn the bloody witnesses of his guilt. In one of his drawers were discovered the dress he had worn the night before, covered with blood, and the pistol with which he had effected the horrid act; and to Miss Bolton, the afflicted and amiable daughter of his victim, he confessed, in a moment of terrour and surprise, that he had taken the spade with which he had buried the body of an individual, whom he had killed the night before: but with impudent

pudent absurdity he added that the person killed was a robber, who had been shot accidentally by his the robber's pistol, which he had presented against her father. This happened, the prisoner asserted, as he the prisoner endeavoured to wrest the pistol from the pretended footpad.

" Such, gentlemen, is the conclusive and incontrovertible evidence that shall be adduced to you, and such is the evidence on which the coroner's jury convicted the prisoner of wilful murder. In addition to this, it will be shown that since he was committed to the gaol of Abingdon, there was found in his pocket the key of Mr. Bolton's cabinet, in which was personal property to a large amount; and the last will of the deceased, in his own hand-writing, will be produced, wherein is contained a bequest of three thousand pounds

sterling, to his unnatural and cruel murderer. Fatal bequest! Unfortunate legacy! The very kindness of the worthy man was probably a chief cause of his destruction. It is also clear that another object of the prisoner was to possess himself of the property in this cabinet, to obtain which he did not hesitate to commit the most atrocious of crimes; and which, but for his speedy apprehension, he, doubtless, would have seized.

"You are assembled, gentlemen, on an awful occasion. The life of a man is in your hands. Save him if it be possible. If it be possible! Alas! it is not. You are assembled, this day, to give by your verdict the vengeance due to the outraged laws of society. Oh! if in the tissue of this woeful subject, one thread could be found that might lead even to a doubt,

would

would not I be the first to seize it, and pursue the clue of mercy? But, here, all is conviction, all is murder, all is hell; and there the fiend, who must expiate his barbarous and infernal crime, by a publick and ignominious death."

Thomas Andrews the gardener, and James Taylor the butler, were then severally examined, and in every particular corroborated the statement of counsel.

Mr. Alcot deposed that he met Andrews in great agitation, about two o'clock in the afternoon, that he returned with him a short way, and that he saw the deceased lying, partly covered with earth, and in a shallow grave, according to Andrews's description. He added that the gaoler of Abingdon had, in his, Mr. Alcot's presence, found in the prisoner's pocket, a key, which afterwards proved to be the key of

Mr. Bolton's cabinet, wherein was negotiable property to the amount of six thousand pounds, together with the will of the deceased, in his own hand-writing. The will was identified, and the writing proved, by Mr. Alcot, to be that of Mr. Bolton. It contained a bequest of three thousand pounds to the prisoner.

The innkeeper at Newbury was the next witness produced, and he deposed that he well knew Mr. Bolton who had been his landlord, but that he had not seen him for some months, and that on the night laid in the indictment, the deceased had not visited the Mitre-inn, though his *valise* had been sent thither the day before, nor had he left Newbury the next morning in the coach.

The clothes, the pistol, and the spade, were all produced and identified. The

gentleman

gentleman who conducted the prosecution now stood up and said, "We might close here, my Lord, on the part of the crown, certain that the enlightened and respectable gentlemen who compose that jury, would, without quitting their box even for a minute, unhesitatingly convict the prisoner. But to demonstrate his guilt beyond the remotest possibility of doubt, we shall examine one witness more. It has been already shown that he left Bolton-hall with the deceased, who intended to sleep that night at the Mitre-inn in Newbury; that the deceased never reached that inn; that the prisoner at the bar, some time after their departure, took a spade which he returned to its place before morning, but which, while in his possession, received the stain of blood; that the body was buried in the ground, an operation that re-

quired a spade; that the clothes worn by the prisoner that night, were found concealed in a secret drawer and spotted with blood, and that along with them a pistol was discovered. Why take the spade, unless to bury the body? He took the spade, it was marked with blood. He wore the bloody clothes, and they had all received their sanguinary marks on the night when the man was killed and when the body was buried. Is not this damning proof? That the murder was perpetrated in order to commit a robbery, appears by the key of the cabinet having been found in the prisoner's pocket, whose cruelty and ingratitude are confirmed, if confirmation were nessary, by the will of the deceased bequeathing to him a sum of three thousand pounds. But one witness remains to be examined, whose evidence will strengthen

strengthen all that has been said, and will terminate the tragick tale. Let Miss Bolton know that his Lordship begs to see her."

Miss Bolton, pale, trembling, emaciated and almost insensible, entered in deep mourning leaning on two ladies. She had been confined to her bed till this morning. A more interesting figure cannot be imagined. Silence was called and obtained.

The judge, in the most soothing and polite terms, said he hoped she might be able to compose herself, assured her that nothing would be permitted which might in the most remote degree wound her feelings, and advanced a few steps to conduct her to the bench whereon he sat. It was a solemn scene. It was a daughter accusing the murderer of her father: but that murderer was her lover, and that father was, oh! such a father! How dear was each of them to her heart! "Miss

"Miss Bolton," said his Lordship, "this is a sad and trying hour. The laws of our country call for justice and an example, and it happens, unfortunately, that your testimony has become necessary. You shall be asked only a few words. These I will have the honour of addressing to you myself, and your answers it shall be my care to repeat aloud. But first according to our forms, (with which I would in this instance willingly dispense, if it were in my power) it is necessary that you should be sworn. Be pleased, therefore, to hold this bible. 'You will true answers give, Madam, to all such questions as shall be put to you on this trial; so help you, God.' Now, kiss the book, and, in order to prevent any doubt or misconception, you will be so good as to try to identify the prisoner."

Julia,

Julia, who till now had not raised her eyes, encouraged by the gentleness and suavity of the judge, turned them towards Theodore. His looks met her's—Unfortunate man! Didst thou see in that glance the malevolence of a prosecutor, the estrangement of inconstancy, or the coldness of insensibility? No, kind, compassionate and tender, those lovely eyes viewed thy miserable condition with a tear of pity and affection, and thou feltst at that moment that at least one sincere friend was still left thee in a strange land and among a host of enemies.

The dejected, sickly appearance of the prisoner, so lately her preceptor, added to the anguish Julia already felt, and increased her perturbation.

"That is *Monsieur Dalbert,* my Lord," said she, in a voice scarcely to be heard.

"You recollect, perhaps," said his Lordship, "the 27th of last month."—"I do."—"Had he any conversation with you then upon this melancholy affair?"—"Yes, my Lord."—"Pray, relate the conversation."—"He said that he had taken a spade the night before, from Bolton-hall, for the purpose of burying a man who had stopped my father and him. The deceased, he said, intending to rob them, held a pistol in his hand, which in Mr. Dalbert's endeavour to wrest it from him, accidentally killed him. But for——"—"Miss Bolton, I shall ask you no further questions; and if the prisoner has no interrogatory to put, you may retire."—"Then Miss Bolton, you, too, believe me guilty?" said Theodore. The look that accompanied these words, which were the first he spoke during the trial, penetrated to her heart. It conveyed all the bitterness

bitterness of reproach, but the expression itself was uttered with that softness of manner, that melody of tone, which love alone and Julia could teach.

Animated, roused, she forgot her timidity, and, for a moment, her distress. "Believe you guilty of my father's murder! No, Theodore! Of your innocence I never entertained a doubt. I know you to be too good, too gentle, and too grateful, for such a crime. I know you loved my dear and honoured parent as sincerely as I did myself; and I have attended here this day from a desire to utter this, which I hoped might serve you on this dreadful trial, and not to assist in your prosecution. To serve you I would do much, to save you I would willingly lay down my life." She uttered this with rapidity and fire. It was the last exertion of pity and attachment. It was the

the passionate effusion of love, too powerful to be checked. A deadly whiteness suddenly overspread those cheeks, which a moment before glowed with crimson. A universal tremour seized her frame, and she would have fallen to the ground, but for the assistance of the judge.

Wonder and curiosity were expressed in every countenance. Theodore in the contemplation of her illness and danger, no longer remembered that he was a prisoner. "My Julia," said he, utterly unmindful of the surrounding crowd, "let me assist you. Let my arms support you. These unfeeling men shall not pollute you with their touch. Thou sayst true, admirable girl, I am innocent; but not more innocent, than grateful to thee for what thou hast done and said. Let my gratitude now appear." His words were uttered with

gestures of frenzy, and were accompanied by an effort of prodigious strength and activity to advance to her; but the gaoler and his assistants overpowered him. "Barbarians, ruffians, assassins!" cried, he "unhand me! Behold the fairest and sweetest of her sex, whom you have reduced to that extremity, and let me bring her back to life!" As he said this, she was carried out of court senseless and without motion, and he was forced back in a state of indignant desperation.

The scene was new to the judge. He was a man of feeling and it moved him. He desired silence to be called, and then addressed himself to the prisoner.

"Mr. Dalbert, the evidence for the prosecution is concluded, and it now remains for you to examine your witnesses, to prove your innocence, and to address the court.

court. The laws of England are not in heinous cases unmerciful. You might have had the aid of counsel, you declined it. You might have cross-examined each of the witnesses, but this, likewise, you declined. The proofs against you are few in number, but strong, and I fear convincing. But philosophy, and I will add christianity, justify me in thinking that it is possible you may be innocent. Show that you are not guilty, Sir, and you will have contributed much indeed to my individual happiness. Be cool, be collected. No person shall interrupt you, no noise shall disturb you, and no impatience will be felt by me or by the jury."

Such a speech was well calculated to calm the disorder of the prisoner. His agitation gradually subsided, and he became firm and undisturbed.

CHAP. V.

If ever you have look'd on better days;
If ever been where bells have knell'd to church;
If ever sat at any good man's feast;
If ever from your eye-lids wip'd a tear,
And know what 'tis to pity, and be pitied;
Let gentleness my strong enforcement be.

.....

No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
Not the kings crown, nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
Becomes them with one half so good a grace
As mercy does.

"Who, among the various wretches," said the prisoner in a graceful attitude and with a low but distinct delivery, "doomed by an incomprehensible and cruel destiny to misery, is most miserable? Who suffers most affliction and receives least pity? Who of the innumerable inhabitants of the wide globe has the dreadful distinction of prime and pre-eminent pain? I am he.

"Oh!

"Oh! for the nervous tongue that might convey my piteous tale into your inward hearts, then would your bosom send forth sighs of commiseration and your tears bear witness to my wrongs! Poverty, disappointment, corporal suffering, death, what are these? the inevitable portion of mortality. I regard them not, I fear them not; but universal reprobation, ignominy and the gibbet—these, these I confess, fill my soul with terrours: yet these are evils that many suffer; but where shall we find an honourable and innocent man publickly accused of treachery, ingratitude and murder? where shall we find a man conscious of his own purity, and yet incapable of controverting any part of the evidence that convicts him of these crimes? Alas! I am he.

"The black and detestable calendar of capital

capital delinquents will transmit my trial and my condemnation, with those of the vilest and most abhorred of miscreants, to the latest posterity. The moralist will quote me as a rare and tremendous example of depravity, and as a striking instance of the divine vengeance. The misanthrope will adduce my horrid story to justify his distrust and hatred; and nurses, with my name, will affright their wayward babes. On the gallows I shall be hanged, like a dog, loaded with the maledictions of the populace. No consecrated spot will receive my corpse. To the barbarous knife of the surgeon will my body be consigned; and yet, I am innocent.

"Almighty Creator! Thou whom I have been taught to worship with love and fear from my infancy! Thou, oh Lord! knowest the wrongs I suffer. Thou knowest

my

my integrity, and the filial affection that I bear to the best of women. On thy divine justice my heart relies. Thy inscrutable wisdom I adore. Thy unspeakable goodness I have experienced. Father of mercy! support, I beseech thee, my honoured mother under the heavy affliction of my ignominy, and breathe into her bosom a certainty of my innocence. Open the exhaustless fountains of thy mercy, and mitigate, oh God! her maternal sufferings! Men of Abingdon, by that Being whom I have supplicated, I utter truth! May his Providence utterly forsake me; may his utmost wrath eternally pursue me, if I be not guiltless of the crime alledged against me!

"Gentlemen of the jury, though you will not, and perhaps cannot belive me, let me solicit your attention for a few minutes. What

What I say will be remembered. I perceive it is noted down. It may hereafter prove useful, and if in the course of succeeding time, this mysterious and horrible affair shall by any means, inconceivable at present, be developed, it will be seen how the much-injured Theodore Dalbert thought and spoke in the hour of unprecedented anguish. This is the last breath of my vanity; will you pardon it? I expect not your acquittal. Hope has fled from my bosom, and in her place sits despair.

"To you, my Lord, I owe the warm tribute of gratitude. Your patience and your mildness have touched me sensibly. Wretch as I am, and overwhelmed with calamity, I can feel your condescension and benevolence. Such power have politeness

ness and humanity, over the heart of man.

" Called upon for my defence, invited to prove my innocence, what shall I say? How shall I begin? endowed with no eloquence, instructed by no preparatory study, practised in no declamation, in vain I would oppose the industry with which my prosecution has been conducted. But at least let me describe all that passed on that fatal night, and a few circumstances which happened previously.

" My Lord, and gentlemen of the jury, my family is well known to you. General Dalbert is my grandsire. I was born and educated in France, but my father who was an Englishman, instructed me early in the language of this country. He is dead. It is now more than a year since Miss Bolton visited

visited me in Bourdeaux. I had for some time prior to that period supported my mother and myself by my pen. I wrote for the stage and I wrote novels. My works were not unsuccessful, but I was poor. Mr. Bolton kindly invited me to England, hoping, as he said that my grandfather, who had then no child, might be prevailed upon to take me under his protection. I was not in circumstances to travel, and Mr. Bolton, I believe to conceal his generosity, offered to engage me as his secretary and his daughter's preceptor, at a salary of two hundred pounds a-year. I accepted his offer with gratitude. Half of this sum was sufficient to support my mother, the remainder was enough for me. Some accidents happened afterwards that separated me from my new friends for a time, but these I need not now mention.

"Mr.

" Mr. Bolton, in consequence of a tedious illness under which my grandfather laboured, was obliged to postpone his intended visit to him: but having some business, of the nature of which I am entirely ignorant, to transact in London, he made preparations for a journey. He expected, he said, to be detained there for a few days, and on the evening of the 27th of last month, he committed to me the key of his cabinet, in which were papers that I had to arrange and copy. On this same evening he expressed an inclination to walk to Newbury, where he was to take the coach next morning, and I accompanied him on his walk thither.

" It was about nine o'clock, and we had passed through part of the shrubbery, along a winding path, when suddenly I heard, as I followed him, (there was not room for

for two to walk abreast on the path) a loud cry, before me, of 'Stop!' The winding of the path and the thickness of the surrounding foliage had prevented me from seeing the person who spoke, and consequently had prevented him from seeing me. But the moment I heard the sound I rushed forward, and found that my friend had been stopped by a person with a pistol in his hand. I immediately threw myself on the man and endeavoured to seize it. We were nearly of equal strength. Our contest continued for a minute, when, by accident, in our struggle the trigger was pulled, and the robber was mortally wounded in the face.

"Mr. Bolton had been a long time infirm. He was always nervous, and at this moment his agitation was excessive. He advanced to the body, now lying on

the ground, in order to examine it. The moon shone brightly upon it. 'It is, it is he, oh! oh! lost! undone! unfortunate! reprobate!' cried he. He knew the person of the deceased, and in the contemplation of the body, and his distress and sorrow for what had happened, he seemed to have totally forgotten both me and his journey. The hurry of my spirits diminished, perhaps, in some degree, my sensibility, for I confess I looked at the corpse without feeling the least contrition. But I could not be so indifferent to the apparent misery of my friend, the agony I should say. I really want words to describe his extreme grief, his violent emotions. I saw plainly that the deceased had been dear to him, and that they had been united by no common ties. The circumstance was extraordinary and mysterious, and it therefore

therefore was not for me to inquire into it. —'Is it thus,' exclaimed he, 'I see you, is it thus you perish?'—'Sir,' said I, 'be pleased to moderate your affliction: the deceased was a robber, perhaps a murderer. The pistol went off by accident. The law of self-defence justifies us in what has happened; and upon no principle of reason or justice, is he worthy of your pity or regret.'—'Oh Theodore!' answered he, 'if you knew who he was, how dear, how very dear to me, you would curse your rash and cruel hand that caused his death. A terrible tale is attached to his appearance here. I am filled with horrour and alarm; and when it is known that he has fallen in this place and by your means, the universal detestation of mankind will attend me. Shame and disgrace will follow my steps, and tears, bitter re-

flection and remorse will evermore await me. Oh God! oh God! what shall I do, whither shall I fly?' Saying this he knelt by the dead body, and burst into tears. Moved and shocked by the vehemence and agitation of his manner, and the obscurity of his expressions, I entreated him to arise. 'I perceive, Sir,' said I, 'some mystery in this affair: I seek not to develop it—Let us continue our walk to Newbury. In my faithful bosom the transaction shall be for ever buried, and in a retired stop I will this night deposite the dead body. No one shall see it; no one shall ever find it; and father Lanesby, your pious and venerable confessor, shall privately consecrate the ground, and perform over the corpse every necessary ceremony. Be composed, dearest Mr. Bolton; you make me excessively unhappy to see you thus. I

repeat

repeat it, you are blameless. The fault, if any, is mine. Be persuaded, therefore, and let us proceed.'

'Well, be it so,' replied he, somewhat relieved by my words. 'To you, my dear Theodore, I commit the management of this shocking business. Oh! when you hear the name of the deceased, you will wonder how I can survive him. Know that'—'Hold, Sir,' said I, 'you will only irritate your grief by dwelling on the subject any longer. Another time we shall speak upon it at our leisure.' Alas! had not my regard for his feelings prompted me to recommend silence to him, I should now be enabled to vindicate my innocence in some other manner than by mere assertion. But I am a child of misfortune, and at my birth the planet of malignity presided, and shed upon my hopeless head its

most baleful influence. We proceeded to Newbury without exchanging another word. Arrived at the entrance to the town, he took both my hands, squeezed them affectionately, and pointing to me the road we had come, left me with precipitation.

"It was now past ten, and I had a solemn promise to fulfil. I returned with speed to Bolton-hall, which is about three miles from the spot where Mr. Bolton parted from me. I admit that I entered the hut wherein the garden implements were kept, and that I took from among them a spade. I do not recollect, now, whether or not I coughed while in the act of searching for it, but I suppose I did, as Andrews has said it. With the spade I returned to the body, which I dragged to a retired spot, about a hundred and fifty yards from the

the place where the shot had been fired; and having dug a grave, I put the corpse into it, dressed as it was. I then covered it with the earth I had raised, and returned to Bolton-hall, taking care to deposite the spade where I had found it. I admit that it might while in my possession have received marks of blood, and I must believe that in the place where I had buried the body of the robber, Andrews found that of Mr. Bolton. It was day-light when I entered my own apartment, and having stripped myself, I put the dress I had worn, together with the pistol which had shot the robber, into one of my drawers. I acknowledge that the blood upon my clothes was my motive for doing so, and that it was my intention to burn them when an opportunity should offer for that purpose.

"The next morning when I heard from

Derrill that Mr. Bolton was murdered, and that I was accused as the assassin, I conceived that the body which I had buried had, by accident, been discovered; and that from some resemblance in the dress and shape, they had stupidly mistaken it for the body of Mr. Bolton. With this persuasion I attended the coroner's inquest, not doubting that I could, in a moment, cover my accusers with confusion and disgrace. I therefore felt during the trial, more of exultation than apprehension, and it was not until it was concluded, and that I turned about to prove to them their blunder and impertinence, that I had the most distant idea of Mr. Bolton's death.

"It is not within the scope of language to convey—it is not in the power of the imagination to conceive, what I then felt. To see his murdered body were alone enough to produce dismay and woe; but to have these

these painful feelings aggravated by the reflection that I was charged and believed to be his murderer, and that as such I would probably suffer an ignominious death.—Oh what a situation was mine! And what was the conflict, what the confusion caused in my mind, by viewing his mangled remains where I expected to see the corpse of another? and then each of the two bodies to be wounded in the same manner and in the face! No, I cannot describe what fills me, even at this moment, with perplexity, horrour, and consternation. For a moment such was my stupefaction that I actually thought I had killed my benefactor, and in consequence I felt all the remorse and self-abhorrence that such a crime may be supposed likely to produce. Never since the human heart beat with sorrow, never since the human

mind experienced surprise, never since the human frame trembled with fear, was terrour, astonishment, or anguish equal to mine. That I who would have devoted my whole life to promote the happiness of the only man on earth I loved, who would have hazarded my existence to preserve him from danger, should be thought his murderer, his treacherous, base and mercenary murderer, the murderer of Mr. Bolton! Oh! it was too horrible! Had the means of self-destruction been within my reach, I fear I should not now be here. I threw myself on the body, I kissed its cold hands, and I thought I should have expired with grief and agitation.

"Convicted by the jury, I was conveyed on foot to gaol, a distance of some miles. It was with difficulty that the officers of

justice could preserve me from the fury of the people, and my arms being pinioned, I could oppose no resistance. An immense crowd was soon assembled about me, all hissing and reviling, and all willing to tear me to pieces. Defiled with the dirt they threw on me; stupified by the blows they gave me; pale, wild, and tottering, I prayed for death to release me from my sufferings; and "*Dalbert the murderer*" was so often reiterated around me, that in a short time I could scarcely dare to believe myself not guilty. At length I gained a refuge from my persecutors in my solitary cell, where, bound by heavy fetters, I have since remained.

"I have told you, my Lord, and you, gentlemen of the jury, all that has passed within my knowledge. I have told you nothing but the truth. This, as I hope to enter the mansions of the righteous, and as

I value the promise of an hereafter, I asseverate. It is my singular and unhappy destiny to stand in a situation wherein exculpation is impossible, and in which I myself am confounded with the extent and magnitude of my apparent guilt. But I am innocent.

"If it be asked, how came Mr. Bolton to be murdered, and his body placed where that of the robber had been buried, and what has become of his? I know not how or what to answer. A mystery that I can neither develop nor comprehend, involves the transactions of that horrible night in utter and irreconcileable obscurity and contradiction. At times I think that some miscreant, associated with the footpad, had been an unobserved witness of the scene in the shrubbery, and that immediately after I parted from Mr. Bolton, he murdered and

then

then robbed him; but why incur the risk or take the trouble of carrying away the robber's remains, and placing in their stead those of my benefactor; or how discover the spot that I had chosen for the interment, I can neither explain nor conjecture. Perhaps he overheard me say to Mr. Bolton that I would bury the unknown, and, having effected the assassination of my friend, returned to the shrubbery in time to observe whither I conveyed the corpse; and perhaps his intention in exchanging the bodies, and shooting Mr. Bolton in the face, was to found a criminal prosecution against me. But I am so bewildered, so lost in the distraction of my vague surmises, that upon this impenetrable secret I must not be more diffuse, as I cannot be satisfactory.

"The proofs brought against me have been

been I confess clear and convincing, but whether the gentleman who stated the case, in the decisiveness of his manner, the violence of his invective, and his premature condemnation, complied with his express instructions, or followed the ordinary course of his profession, I know not. I should be sorry to call his profession a trade, or to think that that trade had tricks. He spoke from a written document, and therefore much of what he uttered was doubtless the substance of his brief; but as that brief could merely convey intended proofs, and therefore could not convict me, and as every man is considered innocent by the enlightened, until he is found guilty on being tried, I shall not pretend to say whether the learned gentleman evinced his knowledge, his logick, or his humanity, *by holding me forth to the publick execration,*

execration, to use his own words, *as a monster of perfidy, ingratitude and cruelty; as a felon, a murderer, a parricide.* Is it liberal or generous in an advocate, enjoying himself the sweets of independence and liberty, to exhaust his borrowed rhetorick, to employ the mechanical and little-meaning common-place substitutes for eloquence, the vulgar fluency of ignorance or vacancy, the artificial and undignified cant and pertness of forensick pleading, with unfeeling flippancy, obstreperous utterance, and grotesque gesticulation, against a wretch, trembling for his life, guarded by gaolers, and just led forth from his dark and dreadful dungeon, where bread and water had been his only support, and a little straw his only comfort? If the coarseness and vulgarity of such a speech disgust every person of taste, sense or information,

formation, that happens to hear it, what must be its effect on the object of its virulence who is compelled to listen to it, or would you be surprised if it should irritate his terrour and anxiety even to frenzy?

"In what school the gentleman learned his philosophy I am ignorant, but I fear his position is more useful than true, that *Providence never suffers the crime of murder to escape unpunished.* Equally enlightened is his declaration, that *but for the miraculous interference of some supernatural agent, I should not now be in custody.* These are the mistakes of judgment or the errours of ignorance; but, gentlemen of the jury, was it right, was it decent, was it humane, was it just, to anticipate your conviction, and to tell you that you could not but inflict on me the punishment of death? Should

he,

he, whose rank in society, whose knowledge of the laws, whose superiour education, whose extensive influence, give him an authority over your minds, presume to declare to you, before a single proof was adduced, that your mercy would be injustice, and that you must do what—deprive him of life, whom at that moment you were bound to consider as innocent as yourselves? Was it becoming, was it manly, to cover me with reproach, and to pour on an unprotected and wretched foreigner and prisoner, a torrent of vulgar vituperation? How much more decorous, how much more worthy of a gentleman, a scholar and a christian, would it have been to have conjured you to divest your minds of all passion and partiality, and to suffer no intemperance nor prejudice to disturb or bias your understandings; and then to have

have stated the case, as it was described to him, with moderation, quietness and simplicity; to have shunned all exaggeration and scurrility; to have banished from his language every thing turgid, every thing superfluous; and to have deplored the loss of the deceased, but to have wished, at least, if not to have hoped, that the unhappy prisoner might prove innocent? But I dismiss the speech and the speaker from my thoughts.

"I am now on my trial for a capital offence, and my conviction is to be followed by death. But by what authority are you armed with the power of depriving me of life? This is a solemn question. My Lord and gentlemen, there is an essay on crimes and punishments written by the Marquis Beccaria. It may not have been generally read in this country, and I shall be

be excused, I hope, for stating the outline of his arguments against the justice, and against the policy of capital punishment in any case. It is a book which I read when very young, and I have since studied it with much attention. The drowning wretch will snatch at a straw, and I take the liberty of conveying to you, gentlemen, his reasoning on this subject, not hoping, but not despairing, that it may convince you.

" He says that men are by nature free. To unite themselves in society they were obliged to surrender a portion of their independence, and the conditions on which they did so were what are called the laws. Natural liberty is of little value from the precariousness of its duration, and the number of evils attached to it, and therefore men willingly sacrificed a part of

it

it to secure the quiet enjoyment of the remainder. The sum of all these portions of liberty or power, constitutes the power of every government. To prevent the infraction of this social compact, some motives that might strike the senses were necessary, and it was found that the only effectual motives were punishments; but as no man ever resigned a portion of his natural liberty for the good of the publick, but merely for his own security and comfort, it follows that any punishment which is unnecessary is unjust. It is likewise certain that every individual would decline to put into the publick stock more than the smallest portion possible of his freedom, and merely as much as might be sufficient to engage others to defend him, or in other words to extend to him the benefits of society. The right of punishing is to be

be found in the aggregate of these the smallest portions possible of individual liberty, and all that extends beyond this is injustice.

"Each punishment has two objects, one is to prevent the criminal from doing more injury, and the second is to prevent others from committing a like crime. But who shall say that any community has a right to sacrifice one of its members? Did any one of their number give to them the right to put him to death; or in the smallest portions possible of liberty, can there be contained the greatest of human advantages, life? God created man in his own likeness, and breathed into him an immortal soul. Who but God, then, shall dare to rob of life the image of our Maker? "*Take not away that which thou canst not give.*" If no individual has a right to kill himself,

himself, how can he give such a right to others? The punishment of death therefore is a murderous act of a whole nation combined against an individual.

"It is not the intenseness of the pain that has the greatest effect on the mind, but its continuance, for the sensibility of man is more powerfully excited by weak but repeated impressions, than by a sudden violence. A punishment, to be just, should be severe enough, and only severe enough, to deter others from offending in the manner in which the punished person had offended; and solitary confinement for life is sufficient, and has been found to be sufficient, to deter the most reprobate; nay it is more effectual for this purpose than death. The mind, by collecting itself and exerting all its strength, can, for a while, repel grief and dread, but its most powerful efforts

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are insufficient to resist the horrours of perpetual confinement in solitude.

The punishment of death, moreover, has a bad effect on society from the spectacle of cruelty it presents, aggravated by the solemnity of the trial, and the terrible pageantry of the execution. Let us look to the kingdoms and ages most notorious for capital punishments, and it will be found that they have been invariably those in which the most atrocious crimes have been perpetrated, and on the contrary, in those countries where mildness and humanity prevail, (as in Pennsylvania) there are fewer heinous offences committed, in proportion to the number of the inhabitants, than elsewhere.

"As punishments become more cruel, the minds of men, like a fluid which always rises to the height of its source, grow more callous, and the force of the passions still

still continuing, the wheel in some years terrifies no more than formerly the prison. In some regiments there is no corporal chastisement applied; in others not a day passes that one, at least, of the few hundred men composing the ranks, does not receive the torture of the lash. Is the gentle discipline less efficacious than the bloody? Universal experience proves the contrary. Men regulate their conduct by the repeated impressions of evils that they know, and not by those with which they are unacquainted; and it is possible to make a man as much afraid of solitary confinement for a month on bread and water, as of a flogging that should tear all the flesh from his back.

"Let us suppose, argues further the philosophick Beccaria, two nations, in one of which the greatest punishment is perpetual

petual imprisonment, and in the other the wheel. Each of these punishments will inspire the same degree of dread, and there can be no reason for rendering the former more terrible than it is, which will not be equally valid for augmenting the latter. But who can think the rack too lenient? Capital punishments, then, are unnecessary, useless, unjust, and cruel.

"This, gentlemen of the jury, is a mere sketch of that great man's reasoning; but hasty and superficial as it is, perhaps it will make you doubt the justice of the English criminal code; and if it should convince you that society has no right to take away the life of one of its members, how will you reconcile to your consciences the conviction of a person capitally indicted? To this you will say, is the criminal, proved to be guilty of the offence

alledged against him, to escape all punishment, because no punishment but death is inflicted by our laws for his crime? and are we (ignorant of this abstract and recondite doctrine when we entered our box, and swore to give a true verdict according to the evidence) to perjure ourselves by acquitting the prisoner whom we think guilty? To this I answer shortly, that as it is a less crime to commit perjury than murder, you are bound, as conscientious and honest men, to acquit me, though you should be convinced that I am really guilty; and here I suppose that the breach of your oath would be perjury. But it would not. A perjurer is he who wilfully takes a false oath; but you, summoned under pecuniary penalties to try a prisoner, have been seduced or compelled to take your oath; and its violation, where the life of a fellow-

a fellow-creature would be lost were it observed, becomes a virtue. To observe it were to commit murder; because, on your conviction depends the condemnation, and on the condemnation the execution of this individual.

"If an oath were to bind under such circumstances, there is no cruelty that might not be accomplished under the semblance of justice. Twelve men are forced, by the fear of fines, to assemble, and to swear that they will *give a true verdict according to the evidence* to be adduced to them. If they acquit the prisoner they save his life, or preserve him from torture; but they find him guilty, and expose him unjustly to death or torment; why? because, if they do not, they will have perjured themselves. Silly reasoning! wretched logick! Their acquittal hurts no one, and saves the

prisoner; their conviction murders him; but they hesitate not to pronounce it, for they have been trepanned into an oath to do so. What a trick upon the conscience, how puerile, how preposterous, how barbarous, the practice!

"But is the prisoner, though guilty, to escape all punishment? Yes, if he be arraigned in such a manner as that he cannot be punished at all except with death, which is my case, inasmuch as no human power has a right to inflict death. To pronounce a capital conviction were to commit murder, and the Lord saith in the decalogue, 'Thou shalt not commit murder.' To produce an amendment in the laws, it is only necessary to act in three or four cases according to philosophy, good sense and humanity, by acquitting notorious malefactors, and the legislature must soon,

from

from necessity, correct its bloody code. Gentlemen, I seek not to deceive you. I avail myself of no sophistry. I utter the dictates of reason. The doctrine I have delivered may surprise from its novelty, but it is just. It has convinced me, and it has converted thousands.

"In future times, when there will be no executioners and malefactors will be fewer, with what disgust, with what repugnance will not the studious inquirer peruse the system of English jurisprudence as it respects crimes! How shocked must he be at the continuation, among a nation of poets, philosophers, legislators and lawyers, of a bloody code founded on cruelty, supported by ignorance, and extended by tyranny! Will he not shudder to find, that of the actions which a man is hourly liable to commit, there are near two hun-

dred, which in this country are now punished with death? And what will be his reflections when he casts his eye over the indisputable lists of the thousands who suffer under such laws? Alas! How weakly do reason and virtue oppose, how slowly do they conquer prejudice and violence? If we look into the page of history, what does it disclose? A tissue of craft, rapine, slaughter and imbecility. Each revolution has discovered, and published, and derided the errours and the absurdities of the age preceding it: and we, at this day and in this kingdom, wonder at the laws of Draco, the existence of slavery, the institution of the Holy Office, at the use of the rack, at the trials by ordeal and by battle, at the acquittal by compurgation, and at the mortal penalty of witchcraft. We wonder at these excesses of superstition, at these

mistakes

mistakes of polity, and we deplore their evil effects; but we are blind to the barbarism and savageness of our own institutions, and we know not, or we forget that each capital convict in England is cruelly deprived of that to which society has no right, and that he is murdered—murdered without the plea of necessity even, for it is demonstrable from facts that a juster punishment would be more efficacious in deterring others.

"But let it not be supposed, for an instant, that in the arguments which I have used, I have even by implication insinuated my guilt. I have only said that were I guilty, you would be bound notwithstanding your oath, to acquit me; but while I have breath I will assert my innocence, the consciousness of which only could support me under the heavy pressure of my afflic-

tion. The case against me is mysterious. My guilt I confess is probable. I can offer no proof in my defence, I have only to advance naked, unsupported assertion; but were it not better that ninety-nine criminals should escape than one innocent man suffer? Have I said that my guilt is probable? It is not. Nothing was ever offered to the consideration of a court more remote from likelihood. Ask your hearts if it be probable, if it be possible, to banish by one effort religion, gratitude, mercy and affection, and to fill the place which they had occupied in the breast with the black, corroding, horrible stratagems of murder. To possess the happiness of an unspotted reputation, and to resign this inestimable treasure for the execrable character of an assassin. To walk during life in the peaceful and flowery paths of innocence

cence and virtue, and suddenly, without provocation and without incitement, to plunge into the infernal gulf of parricide. No! great crimes have been ever preceded by slight transgressions, and it is yet to be shown that our nature is capable of passing, at once, from rectitude to atrocity. My past life should acquit me of the charge that is now alledged.

"The most beneficent act of the Deity is the creation of man, and the most acceptable service we can render him is the preservation of our species. Respect his work, then, and destroy not his creature.

"Gentlemen of the jury, I fear it is impossible that your minds can have escaped some impression against me, from the number and the nature of the calumnies that have been within a few days past so widely circulated. Are you sure that your

passions are not inflamed? are you sure that you can weigh the evidence and my reasoning with coolness? are you sure that you are entirely free from prejudice? It has been said that I had an interested motive for perpetrating the crime. Oh! was it not my interest that my only benefactor should live, to realise his noble intentions towards me, and to procure for me from my grandfather a settlement of thousands of pounds by the year? By his death I lost an honourable and secure asylum and a yearly stipend. But in losing him did I not lose my only friend on earth? The only friend who could restore me to my family, to an elevated rank in society, and to all that my utmost ambition could desire? How then did my interest demand so horrible a sacrifice?

"Were I the murderer of Mr. Bolton, would

would his daughter have declared that her only object in attending this court was to express her conviction of my innocence? Is it probable that she would screen the assassin of her beloved parent? or does she feel less poignantly his irremediable loss than the learned gentleman who so humanely anticipated your conviction? Gentlemen of the jury, nothing but my innocence could have caused such a declaration by Miss Bolton. Who can deny that it is possible I may be innocent? Let us then suppose that I shall be unjustly executed under your conviction, and that my innocence will in some time appear unquestionably. What, I ask you, will be your feelings on this discovery? Will you not say to yourselves—'Precipitate and presumptuous that we were! To keep an oath that we should not have taken, we have

committed the most atrocious of crimes? We have wantonly sacrificed that which no earthly power can restore. How useful to society, how respectable, might not our wretched victim now be, had we deigned to hearken to his supplications! Blessed probably with a wife and smiling babes, how happy, how delighted should we be, to witness their felicity—creatures of our wisdom and benevolence! Barbarians that we were! never to recollect any of those numerous cases where the innocent suffered, as proved by events that occurred after their execution!' Will you not, I ask you, suffer the stings of remorse and guilt? will you not shudder to think of your callousness and cruelty? will you not be pointed out as the butchers of a helpless prisoner? and will you not sink into the grave, loaded with the contempt and abhorrence of all

the wise and virtuous, and condemned by your own consciences, as inexorable and merciless murderers?

"But alas! should you be insensible to my reasoning, should you be blind to my misery, should you be deaf to my entreaties, should you exert your tremendous authority, what evil, what suffering, what wretchedness, will you not inflict? my ancient family disgraced, my venerable mother broken-hearted and deprived of all support, and myself exposed on an ignominious gibbet!

"Among the diseases which afflict our species, some there are which spread from individual to individual, and some which descend from one generation to another, first torturing the original sufferer in his own person, and afterwards inflicting their penalties on all his posterity; but the ignominy

miny of my death, more horrible than gout, scrofula or plague, not only will descend a foul and contaminated inheritance to hundreds yet unborn, but with active sympathy, equally peculiar and pestilential, will go back in the scale of being, and brand my mother, my grandfather, and every human being connected with me or them, with shame and dishonour, never, never to be obliterated.

"The tyranny of opinion sometimes produces in the moral world disasters, which, like the liquid circles on the surface of a lake, extend from a point, and increase on every side in proportion as they retire from it. It is not enough for the pitiless eye of society to see me suffer death in pain and disgrace. It is not enough for its obtuse ear to receive my groans and lamentations; but the infamy which its barbarous

barous sentence shall have heaped on me, must be conveyed, with the ingenious industry of elaborate and artificial cruelty, to every corner of the earth where a Dalbert may be found, and spread through his entire offspring for centuries to come. Must that name, heretofore unsullied and respectable, be henceforth synonimous with murderer? or must it become, by any means, extinct? I who should have guarded the sacredness of its character with the vigilance of an eagle and the fury of a lion! ah! who will bear it, henceforth, that can change it for any other?

"My dear and honoured parent, what will be thy fate! an aged, an infirm, a venerable matron, in whose breast time and disappointment have left no earthly affection, save maternal love! For my happiness all her prayers are directed, on me and my former

former hopes all her thoughts are employed. Of my success entertaining no doubt, doting on me with more than a mother's love, and expecting intelligence from me with more than a mother's anxiety. A letter arrives, it is from England. She opens it in haste, expecting to read of my advancement in life, or my introduction to my grandfather. The tide of pleasure already flows through her aged veins, and joy intoxicates her soul. But what does it contain? it gives my short, heart-rending story. The nectar of her hope is converted into aconite! The fond and airy dream of maternal love, of maternal pride, is for ever banished. The letter that was hailed as the harbinger of bliss, blasts her fond, her dearly-cherished expectations. It tells her that I, whom she had educated with so much care, and whose morals and

humanity

humanity she had established by early precept and example; that Theodore Dalbert, her beloved, her son, had—my tongue falters in expressing it—murdered his friend, his benefactor, his father; had basely and cruelly murdered—Mr. Bolton! That no doubt of my guilt was entertained by the most incredulous, and that for this hellish crime I had been—Oh! I cannot finish the sentence! Indeed I cannot.

"Picture to yourselves, if it be possible to do so, what her situation, what her emotions, what her horrour, what her agony will be then. In one fatal moment, all of mankind that she loved, all that on earth she cherished and esteemed, to be at once torn from her sight for ever, and given to her amazed conception, by infernal transformation, as a villain to be abhorred, as a reptile to be loathed! Her Theodore, her only

child, whom she had lately seen in the pride of manhood and the dignity of virtue, exhibited, as the vilest of miscreants, on a loathsome gibbet! Oh! gracious Providence! was ever disappointment charged with such poignant anguish? Forgive these tears, gentlemen, they will flow.

"A youthful conqueror made prisoner, and yoked to a victor's chariot; a nabob returning to Europe with his wealth, more than a kingdom's purchase, and cast pennyless on a desert island; an African monarch, perfidiously betrayed into the hands of a Guinea captain, and conveyed, naked and in chains, a slave to the West-Indies—will afford but a feeble idea of the intolerable shock. Fatal as the stroke of Heaven's lightning, it will, perhaps, carry with it instantaneous death! Immortal powers! and shall the death of my mother be caused by

by me? Wretched woman! little didst thou think I would bring thy silver locks with disgrace and sorrow to the tomb. Little didst thou think that when thou suckledst thy darling, thou wert nourishing a creature who was to tear thy very heart-strings. Better, far better, hadst thou given him poison than thy milk, or hadst strangled him at his birth! Then wouldst thou not know the throes that now await thee.

"But should she, should my mother, survive the dreadful blow, what will be her lot? Deprived of all support, shut out from all society, she must shrink into the narrow and lonely recess of poverty. For the first time in her life, ashamed to meet the look of an acquaintance, her dim and humid eye will seek for those she knows, in order to avoid them. Disease,

ease, hunger, and despair will fasten on their victim, and will torture her with unceasing pangs, till death, impatient of their dilatory torments, shall terminate her sufferings.

"Oh! were I gifted with the powers of oratory, what sympathies should I not touch, what pity should I not excite? I would compare, with the situation of this miserable matron, that of the happy mother of one of you. The tears, the sighs of the one should be opposed to the smiles, the chearfulness of the other, and content, happiness, and hope, should lend their aid to represent, with greater intenseness, their contraries, disappointment, anguish, and despair.

"Ah! can I hope that you, placed at your ease, enjoying affluence, content, and peace; respected by your neighbours, surrounded

surrounded by your families, and at liberty to go whither you will, to do whatever you desire; that you, armed with the awful power to save my life, or deprive me of it, will deign to look down from your enclosure of independence and security, on the most wretched among the sons of man? Oh! will not the apparent impossibility of your ever suffering what I now endure; will not my remoteness from your happy state; will not the very extremity of my woe extinguish your commiseration, and make you even forget that I am of your species?

"What a dreadful vicissitude is mine! a few days ago I was as free as air, enjoying felicity to the extent of my utmost wishes, and even beyond that of my fondest hopes; expecting the immediate protection and liberality of my grandfather; possessing

possessing no small reputation as an author, and dear to all those whom I regarded. From this high and brilliant seat have I in an hour been degraded to the dust, loaded with chains and infamy, thrown into a deep and dreary dungeon, charged with a crime at which my very nature revolts, deprived by fate's impenetrable decree of the possibility to show my innocence, believed guilty by all the world, and looking on the meanest of mankind as my superiour, at least in happiness; my fears all awake, my feelings all tortured, my hopes all blasted.

"This, and worse than this, with burning words should I convey, had I the talent of ready rhetoric, and no breast so obdurate that would not melt, no hatred so inveterate that would not subside, no justice so inflexible that would not relent. Insensibility

bility should shed tears, and cruelty learn pity. From these hard and frigid walls, that have so often returned the sounds of accusation and conviction, should be heard, for the first time, a murmur of compassion. Death that now waits impatiently for your verdict, should fly, disappointed, to some more barbarous tribunal. The very stones should hear me and be moved. Without quitting your box you would pronounce me *not guilty;* the approbation and applause of all the world would await you, and I, joyful as the soul that is transferred by the prayers of the good from utter perdition to the regions of ineffable bliss, should fall at your feet, should implore the blessings of Heaven on your heads, should kiss your knees with gratitude and affection, and should weep from very

very ecstacy. My name should escape a blot, and my mother should still live, and still be happy.

"But, now, what remains but to hear my sentence, and to die? To die! oh! must I, then, must I die upon a gallows? No! let it not be said that an innocent man perished by your verdict! You can save me from infamy, and will you not? Think, oh! think of that last dread day, when the seas and the sepulchres shall give forth their dead, and we all shall cry for mercy! As you hope for pardon at that awful hour; as you would shun the agony of unavailing repentance; as you respect the example of our Blessed Saviour; as you will deserve salvation yourselves, look with an eye of pity on a wretch, who is unfortunate but not culpable, and whose existence

tence and honour are in your hands! Oh save me from infamy! Oh save my mother's life! Oh let us live to bless you!"

The prisoner concluded his speech, and sunk back almost exhausted.

END OF VOL. II.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.

WORKS

Printed at the Minerva-Press,

With the Reviewers' Opinion.

CELIA IN SEARCH OF A HUSBAND,

BY A MODERN ANTIQUE.

THIRD EDITION.

2 vols. 8vo. 12s. boards.

After reading in the Preface to this Novel, a kind of confession that it was written in haste, in order to be first in the market, after the impression made by Cœlebs, we were not a little surprised to find it a production of so much merit.

It is neither an answer to Cœlebs, nor a ridicule, nor an imitation of it; unless, indeed, the heroine, Celia Delacour, should be compared to Lucilla Stanley. It is a pointed and well-written satire upon the follies and vices of fashionable life, as contemplated by Celia, in a visit to her *tonnish* sister in London. Celia is not literally in *search of a husband*, nor does she find one, in London. She was not indeed likely to find one, suited to her taste and feelings, among such creatures as she there encounters. We are extremely sorry to say, that, as far as our knowledge of fashionable life goes, the picture is generally like. We say it with the more sorrow, because we know it to be very possible, that the vices and follies of one important class may bring down the very worst evils upon the whole community. It is true, indeed, that we know of some eminent exceptions to the general censure, but what are a few exceptions, when corrupt example so abundantly prevails?

The anonymous "modern antique" is announced in the preface as a female. Whether this be the fact or not, is of little consequence; the writer is ingenious, and appears to have correct views both of what is and what should be. Instead of satirising Cœlebs, she or he speaks of that work in the most cordial terms of admiration. *British Critic, Oct.* 1809.

The Authoress of these Volumes offers so pretty an Apology, in so diffidently hesitating a manner, for the 'presumption'

sumption' displayed in the title-page, and for the many errors which, she fears, may be discerned by the keen eye of criticism in her performance, that we will promise, in direct violation of our bounden duty, to let both the one and the other pass unnoticed.

'Cœlebs,' she says 'had appeared; *it would be answered*; but it must be answered directly.'

A snarler would perhaps say to the lady, 'Where is the necessity?'—another might be tempted to ask her 'Where is the answer?' For ourselves, we have looked a little farther, even into the next page of her book, where we are told to 'consider that what is sport to *us*, is death to her;' upon which we can only assure her, that she is mistaken in the opinion she has formed of our character, and that we have no sport in the death of any fair lady whatever.

We shall therefore conclude this article, not in the language of censure, but in that of panegyrick. So far from agreeing with the lady in a sentiment which her modesty only could have suggested, so far from thinking that the pious book above mentioned is a specimen of such transcendent genius, that 'a long life, even blessed with *superior talents*, would scarcely produce a work whose *intrinsic* worth could class it with that performance;' we are of opinion that 'Celia in search of a Husband' is direct evidence that a life, not, we imagine, very long, nor yet blessed with any *great* superiority of endowments, is sufficient to produce a work whose *intrinsic* worth sets it very far above the said performance. For, although 'Celia' may want discrimination of character, strength of language, and force of reasoning, which the said performance is asserted to possess, we have not discovered in her the want of infinitely higher and more estimable qualities, those of christian humility, and christian charity. She does not impiously pretend to be so far favoured with a knowledge of the inscrutable designs of Providence, as to point out with certainty the objects of future indignation and mercy. She neither arrogates to herself an undoubted election to eternal happiness, nor, equally undoubting, denounces everlasting damnation against 'such good-natured creatures as Mr. Flam.' *Crit. Rev. Oct.* 1809.

'I would not *attempt* (says this writer,) to pourtray a Cœlebs; neither *my* vanity, nor my own *experience* in *la belle passion* could draw such a portrait: I would rather use my pen to trace a *natural* character; I believe the cause of *morality*

'*morality* to be more faithfully served in offering a possible point for our emulation, than in any ideal perfections that fancy, however sublime, could imagine.' The whole of the novel before us is conducted on this principle. Celia, though displaying moral as well as personal charms of no ordinary occurrence, is not absolutely out of nature. She acts up to the principles of religion, without any of the moral cant; with a mind perfectly feminine, she is bold enough to let reason take the lead; and, in a world of levity, she sets an example which the young of her sex in the present day would do well to imitate. To ladies and gentlemen, this Modern Antique (as the lady calls herself, if a lady it be who is the author,) reads a very instructive lecture. All the fashionable absurdities of the day are neatly satirized; and the modern London-fine-world is here drawn with exactness, and exhibited, as it ought to be, not as an object of envy, but of disgust; for life in London is, indeed, *wasted*, not *used*. Yet it is the wish of all females, educated on the present plan, to shine in this atmosphere of folly, and to display their *nakedness* (a new term for dress) "at midnight dances and the public shew."

Celia is introduced to the circles of fashion only to despise them: Morality and religion are made her rules, not the *usage of society*, nor the custom of the world. She distinguishes between innocent and degrading conformity, and never suffers fashion to obliterate principle. She exhibits the effects of an education truly moral and sensible, in the course of a visit to her sister, Lady Townly; appears to great advantage, when contrasted with the various characters which fill the splendid drawing-rooms at the west end of the town; and shews her good sense as well in the offers which she rejects, as in the choice which she ultimately adopts. Our *noblemen-coachmen*, and our *naked, pocketless, shoe-making* ladies, may not be pleased with the ridicule which is here lavished on them: but they richly deserve it; and if our modern fashionables were not ashamed of being considered as *moral*, the exhibition in these pages would lead to some reformation. Cœlebs attempted too much, by endeavouring to make our fine people as religious as nuns and friars; and perhaps the efforts of Celia to infuse into them a little common sense may equally be thrown away. Can a luxurious capital be reformed by sermons, poems, or novels?

Monthly Review, Oct. 1809.

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